A DISCOURSE OF NATURAL and REVEAL'D RELIGION IN Several Essays: OR, The Light of Nature, A GUIDE TO DIVINE TRUTH.

LONDON,

Printed for *John Newton*, at the three *Pigeons* against the *Inner-Temple-Gate* in *Fleet-street*, MDCXCI.

Licenſed,

May 18*th.* 1691.

The LIGHT of NATURE a Guide to DIVINE TRUTH.

In the Discoveries it makes of God in respect of { Himself and his Creatures.

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CHAP. I.

Of God's Exiſtence.

WHoſoever ſhall view the World in the ſeveral Stages and Revolutions of Time, may eaſily obſerve, that there was never any Nation ſo overwhelm'd with Barbariſm and Ignorance, but did readily believe there was ſomething Superior to their own Nature; which had Power to hurt and to defend them: and in conformity to this Belief, they did aſcribe more than human Honours to their Demons; endeavouring alſo by their Prayers and Oblations, to make them Propitious, and Aſcribing all their Succeſs and Felicity, as well as their Calamities, to the Decrees and Diſpenſations of their Gods.

'Tis true; the Notions they had of the Nature of theſe Gods were very groſs and abſurd, ſince they ſometimes imagin'd them to dwell in certain Beaſts, in Brutes, in Plants, or Images made of Stone, Wood, and the like, believing them almoſt to be as many in Number as

their Worſhippers, and ſubject to the ſame Viciſſitudes and Diſtempers of Paſſions. But how abſurd ſoever they were in their Rites and Ceremonies, in this they did all agree, that ſuch Numens did preſide over them, and were therefore to be approach'd with all Veneration and Humility; to be invok'd with all Fervour and Conſtancy, and to be appeas'd with ſome kind of Expiations; all which being the concurrent Senſe of Mankind in all Ages, can be no other than the Law of Nature, and muſt be therefore of Eternal Truth, as being deriv'd from that one firſt and ſupream Cauſe which gave Nature its Exiſtence.

I queſtion whether there were ever any who did abſolutely disbelieve the Exiſtence of a Deity, not admitting it in ſome degree or other. As for thoſe amongſt the Ancients who were Canoniz'd for Atheiſts, ſuch as *Diagoras*, *Lucian*, and the like; 'Tis plain, that they only derided thoſe who were eſteem'd Gods in their own Times, who indeed had not the leaſt Pretenſion to Divinity. And as for thoſe who believ'd the Eternity of the World or of Matter, ſuch as *Ariſtotle*, *Epicurus*, and the like; though ſuch a Belief were utterly inconſiſtent with the Notions of a True God; nevertheleſs

vertherleſs, they did in ſome inferiour manner or other believe the Exiſtence of Divine Beings. But whoſever they were of this Tribe, and whatſoever their Belief was; this is certain, that they could never erect themſelves into a Sect, nor make any conſiderable Body of Men to be of their Perſwaſion.

And as for our Modern Atheiſts or Scepticks, as they are known to be Men whoſe Natural Improvements are but ordinary, conſiſting only in Boldneſs and ſome little Gallantries of Wit; ſo is it as well known, that they are Men of Senſual and Flagitious Lives; and that what they teach, is not ſo much their Judgment as their Deſign; not what they think, but what they wiſh ſhould be: For could they make the Being of a God, or (what amounts to the ſame thing) his Providential Regiment of the World, but diſputable, there would be ſome Colour they think for their Licentious Courſes, to which their Lives are Proſtituted: And yet there was never any Man of Parts who has profeſſedly impugn'd the Being of a God, only by ſome oblique and ſide Approaches they have adventur'd to Attack him in his Prerogatives, either in denying his Providence, by reaſon of

ſome ſeeming Incongruities in ſecond Cauſes; or admitting his Providence, they endeavour in the next Place, to make his concurrence with Human Agents, to lay a neceſſity upon the Will for the commiſſion of Evil Actions, and by this means, they impugn his Goodneſs; or laſtly, by denying the Souls Immortality, or a ſtate of future Rewards and Puniſhments, they labour to deſtroy his Juſtice; but of theſe Points more hereafter. For the preſent, 'tis worth our Conſideration, what ſome have excellently well obſerv'd, That Men of this Denomination, will be ever talking of their Opinion, as if they fainted in it within themſelves, and would be glad to be ſtrengthned by the conſent of others.

But to return to the Belief and Practice of the *Gentiles*; we are carefully to Conſider, what there was in their Idolatrous Worſhip, which was founded in the Law of Nature, and what it was which depended upon the Will and Genius of the Worſhipper. That which was founded in the Law of Nature, and in which they did all agree, was this; That there was ſome Superiour Power which did obſerve their Actions; which did govern all the Occurrences of Life,

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and was Author of all the Good and Evil which did happen to them.

From this Belief of the Power and Providence of their Gods, they formed to themſelves two Internal Acts of Devotion, *viz.* Love and Fear; as alſo two External Acts, to wit, Invocation and Worſhip. Now this Worſhip conſiſted chiefly in theſe Duties: Firſt, Veneration and Honour: Secondly, Oblations, which were either Expiatory to appeaſe the Anger of their Gods, and make them Propitious; or elſe to teſtifie their Thanks and Gratitude for the Bleſſings they receiv'd; all which flowing Naturally from a belief they had of their Gods, and that they were the Original of Good and Evil, and conſequently of Rewards and Puniſhments, is an evident Demonſtration, that they did all meet in thoſe general Notions, wherein the Worſhip of the True God was moſt concern'd.

CHAP. II.

The Belief of the Heathens concerning God.

NOw he that ſhould give a true Account or Hiſtory of the Heathen Gods, might himſelf have hopes to be of the Number of them, by doing a Work more laborious and difficult, than many of thoſe for which ſome of the Ancients were Deified: Their Number (as *Varro* Reports) amounted to no leſs than Thirty thouſand, and ſo Prodigious are the Stories that are reported of them, that even the falſe Deities ſeem to be both Infinite and Incomprehenſible, no leſs than the True one.

Not therefore to run our ſelves into a Labyrinth of endleſs and headleſs Fables, we may curſorily obſerve; that as all the Heathen Gods had their Original aſſign'd them, ſo alſo that they were Mortal too; and that the Foundation upon which after Ages built their Worſhip of them, was laid in the Opinion they had of the Benefits Men receiv'd from them whilſt they lived on Earth; Thus *Bacchus*, *Serapis*, and *Ceres*, were held

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for Deities, as being reported to have been the firſt Planters of Corn and Wine; or ſuch, who in Times of Plenty laid up thoſe Proviſions, by which future Dearths were ſupply'd. All Inventions of Arts and Manufactures were aſcrib'd to *Mercury* and *Vulcan*; of Navigation to *Neptune*; and of Poetry and Muſick to *Apollo*. Upon which account alſo it was, that the *Egyptians* Conſecrated ſo many Beaſts, believing that the Benefit they receiv'd from them, did proceed from a certain kind of Vertue or Divinity, by which they were animated or directed. Amongſt which there was none held in greater Veneration than the Bird *Ibis*, for ſhape much like a Crane; for ſo it was, that theſe Birds fed altogether upon the Serpents which the *African* Winds, at certain Seaſons, brought in vaſt quantities from the Deſerts of *Lybia*.

We ought furthermore to Conſider, the Authors from whom we have theſe Traditions of the Heathen Gods, *viz.* The Ancient Poets, ſuch as *Orpheus*, *Homer*, *Heſiod*, *Aratus*, *Theognis*, &c. All which were by after Ages called *Vates* or Enthuſiaſts, as pretending to ſpeak by Rapture, and with a Poetick Spirit, by which they mixt any Extrava-

gant Fictions of their own furious Brains, with whatſoever former Ages had convey'd to them. So that to beget the greater Admiration, they thought it proper to invent ſuch Stories as ſhould ſeem moſt Prodigious. Now theſe Poets being the only Writers, in whoſe Monuments is Regiſter'd whatſoever relates to the Hiſtories of the Gods; 'twas no wonder, that ſo great a medly of Fictions and Incongruities ſhould caſt ſuch a Miſt on future Ages, as the Wit and Induſtry of the moſt Learned Men could never diſſipate; but by their Comments, Conjectures, and various Readings, they have rather rendred former Traditions more incredible and perplex'd.

Of all the Heathen Gods, *Jupiter* was eſteem'd Supream, as being the Father of moſt of them, and the Fountain of that Power and Vertue, for which every one of them was worſhipped. We read alſo of many *Jupiters*, but of two more Eminent than the reſt; of which, one was born upon the Mountain of *Ida* in *Creete*, as ſome, or upon the Mountain *Dictamnus*, as others affirm. The other *Jupiter* was born in *Arcadia*, and Educated upon the Mountain *Olympus*; ſo that the Actions of the one being frequently attributed to the other, has been

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the occaſion of great Confuſion. However he of *Creete* ſeems to have been the ſo much Celebrated, and to have appropriated the Atchievments of all the other *Jupiters*: He was ſaid to have been the Son of *Saturn* and *Rhea*, and to have deliver'd his Father from the Oppreſſions of the *Titans*; nevertheleſs, *Saturn* upon the Prediction of the Oracle, that he ſhould be depos'd by his Sons, thought to have deſtroy'd them; and of this Reſolution *Jupiter* having notice, he depos'd his Father, which Poets expreſs'd by thruſting him into Hell. After this, *Jupiter* and his two Brethren, *Neptune* and *Pluto*, made a Tripartite diſtribution of the Empire; *Jupiter*, as being the ſtrongeſt, choſe the *Eaſtern* Parts, which was called *Olympus* or Heaven; *Pluto* had the *Weſtern*, which in the Fiction of the Poets regarded the ſetting Sun, or Region of Night, and was called *Inferi*, whilſt *Neptune* had the middle or Maritime Parts for his Lot. The Power of *Jupiter*'s firſt Government, in ſuppreſſing the Petty Tyrants (which were alſo called Giants) as alſo his Juſtice in the Sanction of wholſom Laws, was that which made him to be worſhipped for a God in after Ages: Notwithſtanding being for ſome time ſettled in the Throne,

Throne, he indulg'd himſelf in all Senſual Pleaſures and Paſſions, and committed infinite Rapes and Diſorders, as appears from the Records of the Poets.

Amongſt thoſe who have written of the Heathen Gods, ſome there are who make their Hiſtory to be ſymbolical, and to repreſent Nature: By *Jupiter* underſtanding *Æther*; by *Neptune* the Element of Water; by *Vulcan* Fire; and the Earth by *Ops* or *Cybele*; though others whilſt they make *Saturn* or Κρόνος to be the Son of *Cœlum* or *Veſta*, ſeem to pitch upon the better Original of the Heathen Gods, as alſo of all other Natural Productions whatſoever.

But waving the Fancies of Poets and Mythologiſts, this is certain; that as Men did expreſs their Adoration by ſome certain Rites and Myſteries of Religion, ſo we ſtill find them Invoking *Jupiter* as the Author of all their Bleſſings, and as the Supream Protector and Governour of all human Affairs. Upon which account it was, that the *Ammonii*, a People of *Lybia*, repreſented *Jupiter* with Rams Horns on his Head; which Fiction of theirs had its Original from the *Egyptians* (of which the *Ammonii* were a Colony) who in their Hiroglyphick Devices made the Ram to be the Symbol of Fecundity and

and Strength; which ſuited well with the Notions they had of the Strength and Power of *Jupiter*, and of the Benefits and Plenty deriv'd from him.

But as Men began to be more improv'd by Knowledge, and to be more reform'd and poliſh'd in their Lives; in the ſame meaſure ſtill we may obſerve them to have been more and more averſe to the Stories and Traditions of their Gods: Upon which Account it was, that *Diagoras* and *Lucian* were branded with the Character of Atheiſts; not becauſe they did disbelieve the Exiſtence of a Deity, but becauſe they derided thoſe who were falſly accounted Gods in the Age wherein they liv'd. But *Socrates* being in high Eſteem for Wiſdom, and more Eminent for his Diſ-belief of the Heathen Gods, was put to Death for his Opinion; ſo that 'tis no wonder if *Plato*, and thoſe who follow'd him, having ſuch an Example of *Athenian* Cruelty before their Eyes, became more Timorous and Cautious in expreſſing their own Sentiments, for the moſt part ſpeaking of God under the Name of *Jupiter*, to avoid the Puniſhments of the Bigotted Magiſtrate. And although *Plato* in his Books *de Legibus*; which were to be communicated to the Vulgar, ſpake after the Stile which was

was then in uſe; yet writing to *Dionyſius*, he tells him how he ſhould know when he was ſerious or no: *For when I am ſerious*, (ſays he) *I always preface my Writings by the Invocation of one God; but when otherwiſe, of many.* He frequently calls God, the Father of the Univerſe; the Beginning and End; by whom and for whom all things are made; the Supreme Governour of all things which are or ſhall be; and the Idea of all that's Good.

Epiſt. 13.

As for the *Romans* they us'd more liberty and boldneſs than the *Greeks* in theſe Diſcourſes; ſo that *Tully*, (who was an Academick, or one of *Plato*'s School) never uſes the Name of *Jupiter*, but tells us, That *God himſelf cannot otherwiſe be underſtood of us, but as a certain Spirit free; ſegregated from all mortal Compoſition; ſuch as underſtands and moves all things, being it ſelf alſo endow'd with an eternal Activity.* In like manner *Seneca*, one of the greateſt Luminaries amongſt the *Stoicks*, never talks of *Jupiter*, but uſes the word *Deus*, or God always in the ſingular Number. *God*, ſays he, *has the Exemplary of all things within himſelf, comprehending in his Mind both the Number and Meaſures of whatſoever things are to be done.* And a little after, ſhewing, that God is the Original

Lib. 1. Tuſc. Quæſt.

Seneca, Epiſ. 65.

riginal and Author of all things, ſo the End propos'd by him, is nothing but his Goodneſs; and from thence concludes, That he hath made every thing the beſt that might be. From which, and many the like Paſſages, we are made to underſtand, that the Notions they had of God were true and ſolid, being taken from thoſe Incommunicable Attributes or Properties, which are eſſential to the Divine Nature.

CHAP. III.

Of the Attributes of God.

NOw the Attributes of God are either abſolute, or ſuch without which the Divine Nature cannot be apprehended to ſubſiſt; or Relative and ſuch as regard his Creatures. Amongſt his abſolute Attributes or Properties, the firſt is his Eternity, or his being without beginning or end: For ſhould he have a beginning, then could he not be God, but muſt be inferiour to and after that from whom he had his beginning: but this includes a Contradiction; therefore the Antecedent alſo is impoſſible. And as the Nature of God

God excludes all poſſibility of having a Superiour from whom it may derive its being; ſo alſo do's it exclude all poſſibility of ending: For whatſoever ſhould put an end to its being muſt have greater power and ſtrength than it ſelf, and conſequently the latter Power muſt be greater than that of God; but this is alſo impoſſible. In the next place 'tis eſſential to the Divine Nature to be infinite in Perfection: For ſhould his Perfection be finite and bounded, he might yet be more perfect, by having further degrees of Perfection ſuperadded; for to whatſoever is finite there may be made Addition. Since therefore there can be no Addition made to God's Perfections, they muſt be infinite; nothing but what is infinite being uncapable of further addition or acceſs.

Another Property eſſential to the Divine Nature is his Immenſity, or his being of a Nature which cannot be circumſcrib'd by any imaginary ſpace, how vaſt ſoever: For ſhould there be any Ambient or Imaginary ſpace ſurrounding God, then would he ceaſe to be moſt perfect: For ſhould he fill all Spaces, he would be more powerful and perfect than when he is confin'd to ſome; as we ſee the Imperial Power is greater than the Regal, as ex-

extending it ſelf over a wider Circuit. Now that any thing ſhould be more perfect than God, or that he might be more perfect than he is, is utterly inconſiſtent with the very Nature and Being of God.

And as he is Immenſe, ſo muſt he be Omnipreſent, ſince there can be no imaginable ſpace whatſoever aſſignable, which he do's not fill; and then if he be Omnipreſent, he muſt alſo be Omniſcient; there being nothing done or poſſible to be done in any point of ſpace whatſoever to which he is not preſent: nay, he muſt have a Knowledge or Preſcience of all future Actions whatſoever: For all future Actions muſt derive their Being from him firſt; ſo that God having a foreknowledge of whatſoever he himſelf ſhall hereafter do, muſt have the ſame foreknowledge alſo of whatſoever thing ſhall require his Concurrence. Now that God has a fore-knowledge of whatſoever he himſelf ſhall do is evident, otherwiſe ſomething might fall out contingently and unexpected to him; which implies Imperfection and Ignorance, and ſo not conſiſtent with the Nature and Eſſence of God. The laſt Property eſſential to the Divine Nature, is, That he muſt be One: For ſhould there be more, One could not be

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of infinite Perfection, as wanting the Perfection of the other: Nay, it could have no Divine Perfection, the other having an infinite, and conſequently all Perfection.

The Relative Attributes of God, being ſuch as regard his Creatures, are his Goodneſs, his Juſtice, his Veracity, and the like; all which being agreed to by all to appertain to the Divine Nature in the higheſt perfection poſſible, and being ever attributed by the Heathens to their Deities how falſe ſoever they were, there is no Place left for Reaſon to prove what by its own clearneſs is as undemonſtrable as any firſt Principle whatſoever. Theſe then are ſome of the Attributes of the Divine Nature: To enumerate all is paſt the Abilities of any poor mortal and finite Creature; for they are indeed above number, only ſuch as I have already touch'd upon are ſufficient to evince the Truth of his Exiſtence to whom they do belong; and of thoſe which may be rank'd under this Head, the firſt and principal which does occur to our Conſideration is that Noble Attribute of Gods being the Creator of all things.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

Of Gods Creative Power.

AS for thoſe who held the Eternity of the World, or of matter, we may obſerve of *Ariſtotle*, that in the Courſe of his Reaſonings, (how much ſoever he did comply with the Cuſtoms of the times he liv'd in, and with his own private Paſſions,) he was forc'd to reſolve the Operations of Nature into a firſt Mover: And in his Book *De Mundo*, written in his riper Age, and dedicated to *Alexander*, he tells us, That the World and Order of the Univerſe was conſerv'd by God; and that there was nothing in the World of which he ſtood in need; that he was the Father of the Gods, as well as of Men; and the Producer, as well as the Preſerver of all thoſe things of which the World was made; not by way of commixture with them; but that this Power and Providence of his reſiding in the Heavens, extended it ſelf to all things, and mov'd the Heavens, with the Sun and Moon, ballancing and ſuſtaining the Earth; and providing, that every thing ſhould act according to its Nature. In like manner *Epicurus* his

Opinion was as unſtable and fluctuating as his Atoms. For even *Lucretius*, his beſt Commentator, was forc'd to acknowledge, that the World had a beginning; for had it been Eternal, we muſt needs have met with Monuments of greater Antiquity than the Siege of *Troy*, or the *Theban* War.

Now let us ſee whether what theſe Men granted, of an Eternal, Infinite, and Inviſible Framer of the Univerſe be conſiſtent with that Eternity of matter of which they dreamt 'twas made: Had there been an eternal and præ-exiſtent matter, then muſt that matter have been immutable; for though the things made out of it be ſubject to continual vicisſitudes and corruptions, yet the matter muſt be ſtill the ſame as the Stone and Timber of which the Houſe is made, is the ſame ſtill for nature and eſſence as 'twas before. Now if that out of which the World was made, was Immutable and Eternal, then muſt it have thoſe Perfections of which the Divine Nature chiefly do's conſiſt: but if this cannot be granted, then muſt it be mutable; and then can it not be Eternal; for what's Eternal muſt of neceſſity endure the ſame for ever. But to proceed.

This

This Truth of the Exiſtence of a God, made ſuch deep Impreſſions on the minds of Men through all Ages, that even the Poets themſelves, ſo much abandon'd as they were to their own wanton Fictions, were ever and anon forc't to throw off their Masks, and to expoſe the bare-fac'd Truth. The places cited out of the Ancient *Greeks* are known, and many: As the Paſſages alſo of the *Sibylls* in *Lactantius*. No leſs remarkable are the *Latins*. *Ovid*'s firſt Book of his *Metamorphoſes* ſeems nothing but a Paraphraſe upon *Geneſis*: As alſo *Virgil* in that Paſſage or Fiction of *Æneas* his deſcent into Hell; Lib. 6. Æneid. where his Father *Anchiſes* amongſt other Myſteries tells him,

In the beginning 'twas the Spirit did form
Heaven, Earth, and Seas, Sun, Moon, and Stars of Morn.
The Mind diffuſing through the bulky Frame,
Fermented all the Maſs; and from thence came
Trees, Flowers, Birds, Beaſts, thence alſo Mankind ſprang;
With whatſoever is in th' Ocean.

The like he hath alſo in his fourth Book of his *Georgicks*. What Opinion the Wiſeſt of the *Romans* had touching the Heathen Gods, cannot be better learnt then from *Cato*, in *Lucan*; who being Lucan. l. 9.

reduc'd to great Extremities in the Deſerts of *Libya*, was adviſed by *Labienus* to Conſult the Oracle of *Hamon*, being then near unto it; to which *Cato* moſt Chriſtian like reply'd,

God's Throne's the Earth, the Sea, the Air and Heaven,
And above all, a Mind to Vertue given.
What needs a further ſearch of Gods above,
What ever we ſee, where ever we be, there's Jove.

adding further, that 'twas not the Oracle, but Death which could make him certain, and without more ado he continued on his march, never offering ſo much as once to ſalute *Jupiter*.

In ſhort; whoſoever ſhall conſider, what the wiſeſt of the Heathen ſpake concerning a Deity, though they ſometimes uſed the word (*Jupiter*) as being a Name moſt known to the Vulgar, (yielding herein, (as I have ſaid) to the Stile and Cuſtoms of the Times in which they liv'd.) Nevertheleſs, the Deſcriptions they made, could belong to none but to the only True and Immortal God: For could that *Jupiter* be thought by them to be *Hominum Sator atq; Deorum*, who was born in *Creete*, and ſo came into the World, being Peopled before his

his Birth, as now it is? Could he be the Father of thoſe who were born before himſelf? Or could he give Immortality and Divinity to others, who could not preſerve himſelf from Death? Could he be the juſt and upright Governour of the World, who in his Life time committed ſo many Murders, Rapes, and Inceſts, and after his fictitious Tranſlation, ceas'd not to have his *Ganymede*, and to be employ'd about nothing more than to get Fuel for his Luſt? The groſſeſt Heathen could never believe this, much leſs ſo many Excellent and Learned Men amongſt them, of whom we read ſo much in prophane Story.

Some are of Opinion, that this knowledge which the Heathen had of the True God, was not from any inſtinct of the Light of Nature, but from Divine Revelation; firſt to the Patriarchs, and from them, by way of Tradition deliver'd from Generation to Generation. The Ground for their Opinion is this; The moſt Ancient Authors whoſe Teſtimonies are cited in this Argument, are *Zoroaſtres* and *Hermes Triſmegiſtus*: The former is ſaid to have lived about the beginning of the *Chaldean* Empire, and is by ſome ſuppos'd to have been the Son or Nephew of *Ham*. Whoever he was, *Plutarch* makes him to have liv'd many Ages before the *Tra-* Tract. de Iſid. & Oſer.

jan Wars; he is ſaid alſo to have Inſtituted the Order of the *Magi*; and in Imitation of theſe, the *Perſians* afterwards had their *Sophi*. Theſe *Magi* had the Cuſtody of the Emperors Archives, Regiſtring the Actions of their Lives, and were accounted as Oracles in Matters of Religion. As for *Mercurius Triſmegiſtus*, he was an *Egyptian*, and of the greateſt Antiquity. In the Works which bear his Name, he ſeems to ſpeak as clearly of the Divine Myſteries as *Moſes* himſelf: Now the *Egyptians* and the *Chaldeans* were ever accounted, by all Prophane as well as Sacred Hiſtorians, to have been the moſt Ancient of all Nations; and we find in Scripture, that 'twas with theſe Nations the Patriarchs had greateſt Commerce: For *Abraham* liv'd for ſome time amongſt the *Chaldees* and in *Egypt*, where the Children of *Jacob* alſo with their Poſterity ſojourn'd for ſome Ages: 'Twas no wonder then, that theſe two Nations ſhould have ſo early a knowledge of Sacred Myſteries, as alſo of all other kind of Learning. From *Egypt* it was that the *Greeks* took their Light; *Orpheus*, the moſt Ancient Author amongſt them, viſited *Egypt*, and ſearch'd into all their Sacred Records. Next after him was *Pythagoras*, who not only travell'd into

Egypt,

Egypt, but into *Chaldea* alſo; and 'twas from *Pythagoras* chiefly that *Plato* took his Notions; as the Poets from *Orpheus*: ſo that the nearer they were to the Original, the better always were their Copies.

But whatſoever knowledge the Ancients had by this way of Tradition, certain it is, that they could not but receive much Light too from the Book of Nature: For Reaſon tells us, that whatſoever has a Beginning, muſt have it either from it ſelf, or from ſome other; not from it ſelf, for then muſt it have had an Exiſtence before it had an Exiſtence; the thing which produces another, being ever before that which is produc'd. But if it has its beginning from ſomething elſe, and that from another, and ſo on; we muſt either make an Infinite Progreſs in Natural Productions, which is utterly impoſſible; for no Infinite can actually be made up of Finite Actions; or we muſt at length reſolve all into one firſt Cauſe, which in it ſelf is without beginning, which can be no other than God.

Let a Man turn himſelf which way ſoever he pleaſes, he ſhall find a vaſt Expanſe of Creatures before his Eyes: He ſees the Earth producing every Living

thing; and Plants in their Seaſon, and yielding all things uſeful for the Life of Man. He ſees the Heavens beautified with innumerable Stars of vaſt Bulk and Purity; he ſees thoſe Glorious Luminaries the Sun and Moon; he ſees all theſe Celeſtial Bodies, how they are moſt regular and perpetual in their Motion, moſt unchangeable in their Natures, and of wonderful Influence upon the World. And although he himſelf may in ſome ſenſe be ſaid to be an Abridgment of it, yet is he not able of himſelf to produce the leaſt Inſect; and whatſoever he does, it is done only by application of one thing to another, being altogether Ignorant himſelf of the manner how they perform their Operations; from whence he cannot but conclude, that there is ſomething infinitely more Powerful and Noble than himſelf, which firſt gave a Being to ſo many vaſt and beautiful Creatures: But when he ſhall conſider their ſubſervency to one another, and the juſt Oeconomy of the Univerſe, he muſt acknowledge an Infinite Wiſdom alſo, which does diſpoſe and govern all things in the World; which Conſideration leads us forwards to Diſcourſe of the Divine Providence.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

Of God's Providential Power in reſpect of the Univerſe.

FRom hence, that God is the Creator and firſt Cauſe of all things, it follows naturally, that he is the Preſerver of them alſo, and that he does diſpoſe of all Things according to his own Wiſdom and Pleaſure. For God (as it hath been already prov'd) being Preſent to all the Actions of his Creatures, ſo that nothing can be effected without his concurrence; and having alſo from all Eternity, a foreſight of whatſoever ſhall be done, it cannot be but that God muſt have ſome good Ends, in whatſoever he concurs to, ſuch as is beſt known to his own Infinite Wiſdom, (though ſuch Ends be for the moſt part far different from thoſe propos'd by his Creatures) where making one and the ſame Action to be the Inſtrument of farther Effects, is that which is call'd Providence; which becauſe it is a Point wherein the Power and Wiſdom of God does moſt diſcover it ſelf, and wherein we are daily concern'd, it will require to be more diſtinctly

diſtinctly treated of under theſe Conſiderations. 1. Of Nature in General, and the ſubſervency of things to one another. 2. Of human Affairs, in Relation to Publick or Civil Government. 3. Of human Affairs in particular, or the ſpecial Concerns of Private Men.

And firſt for the greater World; if we look upwards, the Heavens declare God's Almighty Power. Beſides, the Sun, Moon, and the other Planets, all which have a known Influence upon the whole Courſe of Nature, we cannot but take notice of thoſe numberleſs Stars which adorn the upper Firmament of Heaven, each of which is far bigger than the Earth: how Immenſe and Capacious then muſt that Region of *Ætherbe* in which they move and ſwim; all which, together with the Heavens themſelves, are in perpetual and moſt regular Motion, making their whole Circuit in the ſpace of Twenty four hours, with that prodigious ſwiftneſs, that every Point of the *Æquator* in the *Primum Mobile*, or higheſt Firmament, does move above a Hunderd thouſand Miles every Minute, as is ſufficiently prov'd by Aſtronomical Demonſtration.

Vide Clau. in Sphær. Joan. de Sacro Boſco. & Tacquet l. 5. Aſtron. c. 2. Num. 22.

If we look before us upon the Earth on which we tread, we cannot but obſerve

ſerve how Fruitful it is in all ſorts of Animals and Vegetables; what great diverſity of Trees, what delicate Fruits may we obſerve to iſſue from the ſame Soil, together with an infinite variety of Flowers, moſt admirable for Colour, Figure and Smell, and affecting all our Senſes with Wonder and Delight, whilſt our Reaſon entertains it ſelf with a curious ſearch after the Cauſes of each Production; and what it is that does diſtinguiſh every Species, and from whence they are impreſs'd with ſuch different Vertues and Beauty. The divers kinds of Herbs, which we ſee naturally to grow upon the ſame Spot of Ground, is a thing which cannot but raviſh the Contemplative, conſidering that ſome of them are good for Food, others of ſingular uſe in Medicines; others again moſt refreſhing in their Odours, which are yet ſo different, that one has no ſimilitude with another, and yet all theſe Herbs are in their ſmell moſt Fragrant, of a lively and unſpotted Vertue, and diverſified with numberleſs minute Strings or Fibres; by which, as by ſo many little Veins, they ſuck in their Juice and Nutriment from the Earth; all which in a little flux of time ſeem to die, when by ſhedding only a few Grains or Seeds

revive

revive and ſuperannuate; and ſo by a perpetual Succeſſion of new Generations, they repair their paſt decays, and by dying they endure throughout all Ages, and become Immortal. And yet this Earth out of which all theſe Bleſſings are produc'd, by all the diſcovery we can make, is nothing but a cold inſipid Maſs of Matter in appearance, being grateful to no Senſe, and deſtitute of warmth and all prolifick Vertue.

If we paſs into the Region of Animals, we may obſerve how ſome are endu'd with ſingular Strength and Beauty; others with great Sagacity; others are moſt docile and ſerviceable to Man for Neceſſity and Pleaſure: We may obſerve alſo, how ſollicitous and tender they are for the Preſervation and Nouriſhment of their young, though they be otherwiſe moſt ſavage in their Natures; and how every Creature before it can ſtand or ſee, does yet know the way to the Teat.

I cannot think it improper (how trivial ſoever it may ſeem) to relate what I have ſome times, with great Pleaſure and Admiration, obſerv'd of a young Whelp not Six Weeks old, which having eaten ſufficiently of what Meat was given it, took the remainder and hid it, by ſcraping up ſo much Earth with his Noſe and Feet

Feet as cover'd it; and yet, take a Child of Two or three years old, tho' it be endu'd with a Rational Soul, and after it has fill'd it ſelf, it will caſt the reſt away. Whence now is it, that a poor young dumb Bruit ſhould have the knowledge and foreſight of its future wants, and lay up what is ſuperfluous to ſupply after hunger? It could not learn this by Imitation or Inſtruction; no certainly, we ſay then it has it by Inſtinct, or that this Provident Inclination is impreſs'd on it by God the Author of Nature, who takes more than ordinary care for the preſervation of ſuch poor Creatures, which otherwiſe would periſh for want of ſuccour. In like manner we may obſerve, that take a young Whelp, if it can but ſee, and put it on a Table, it will creep or craul about the Edge or Borders of it, and there cry, not venturing to go further. But take a young Child of Two or three years old, and put it on a Table in like manner, it will certainly run forwards without fear, till it fall down headlong, and perhaps break its Neck. Here then we may juſtly admire, how ſuch a little poor ſucking Animal ſhould underſtand its weakneſs and danger; and by the eſtimate it makes of the diſtance of the Ground under it, finds

it

it too great, and not to be ventur'd on but with certain Peril. This can be no other than God's Providential care, who alſo takes the like Providential care for the ſafeguard of Man under all the Circumſtances of his Life, as we ſhall ſee by and by.

If we look upon the Fowls of the Air, we cannot but obſerve, with what ſymmetry every little Bird builds its Neſt, how cautious in chooſing a Place of ſafety; and how vigilant and watchful is it to delude the ſight of Man, when it flies towards it? Whence had theſe little Creatures this wonderful Art of framing ſuch curious and elaborate Receptacles wherein to lay their Off-ſpring? They never could acquire it by imitation, or by the direction of their Dams, being in the Shell only, and in the Bowels of their Mothers when ſuch like Neſts were fram'd. Nay, even the leaſt Inſect of Nature does not fail to create Amazement; ſo that the leſſer the Animal, the greater is the Wonder and Power by which 'twas form'd. The Providence and Induſtry of the Ant is admirable, and ſo is that of the Bee, a Creature certainly above the Commendation of Poets, when we reflect a little upon their Natures; how indefatigable are they in their Labour,

bour, how careful againſt future Neceſſities; how wonderful in their Order; how admirable in contriving their Frame of little Cells; no way detrimental to the Herbs and Flowers they feed on, and moſt uſeful and profitable to Man by their Wax and Honey. The leaſt Inſect that flies before our Eyes, how vile ſoever, has notwithſtanding all the Parts of Life, Reſpiration and Nutrition; and all the Organs of Senſe, and Parts for Motion; all which are form'd with ſuch accurateneſs and delicacy, as far ſurpaſſes the diſcoveries of the accuteſt Oculiſt.

The wonderful Care and Providence of Almighty God for the preſervation of his Creatures, is yet more viſible from hence; That ſuch of them as move ſlowly, and ſo leſs able to fly from danger, are arm'd either with pointed Quills or Pricks, as Porcupines and Hedge-hogs; or elſe with Shells, as we may obſerve in the Tortoiſe, Snails, and divers kinds of Fiſh. The Creatures which are more timorous are generally the ſwifteſt, as Hares and Dear; or elſe by herding together they find ſome ſecurity in their Number. The like alſo we may obſerve of Birds; whereas both Birds and Beaſts of Prey are much fewer in number, living in Dens, and are rarely ſeen but

ſingly,

ſingly, which otherwiſe would be very deſtructive to their fellow Bruits, and alſo dangerous to Man.

But not to expatiate over the ſeveral Tribes of Creatures, we will for brevity ſake limit our Obſervation to ſome general Proviſions of Nature, which will more than inſtruct us of the great Wiſdom and Providence of God, in governing the Univerſe, and in ſupplying the Wants and Neceſſities of his Creatures. If we conſider the Situation and Temper of the Northern parts of the World, and ſuch as lie towards the Pole, we may obſerve how all things are expos'd to the Rigours and Severities which are deriv'd from the Extremities of Froſt and Snow; all which Miſeries are abundantly reliev'd by the comfortable Proviſion of vaſt Woods, which do not only furniſh Men with Food, by nouriſhing all ſorts of Beaſts and Birds of Game in great abundance, but do in a ſingular manner alſo provide for them againſt the Extremities of thoſe Regions, by an extraordinary plenty of Fuel; and by breeding all ſuch Beaſts, whoſe rich and warm Furs are not only a defence againſt the Injuries of the Climate; but by being tranſported into the other Parts of the World, do purchaſe whatſoever is uſeful and delightful for the Life of Man. If

If we regard the hotter Regions which lie under the scorching Sun, such as those betwixt the Tropicks, and which contain almost half of the *Terraqueous* Globe, we shall find the Parching Beams of Noon to be temper'd with the cool and refreshing Breezes which blow constantly at that Season of the day; and even directly under the Equinoctial, during the time of the greatest heats, there fall such vast quantities of Rain, as do not only render that Climate very temperate, and the Air refreshing, but do render the Soil also in most Places as fertile and abounding as is any where to be found upon the surface of the whole Earth. Besides; the equality of Night and Day, and the interposition of the Earth in its whole Diameter, by reason of the direct rising and setting of the Sun, as they are the Effects of its near approach, so do they in a wonderful manner mitigate and balance the intolerable Inconveniencies which otherwise would follow.

Egypt is a Country where it seldom or never Rains, and consequently lying in that degree of Heat, it could not be inhabited, were it not in a stupendious manner refresh'd and water'd by the *Nile*, which overflowing all the Country at such time as it lies expos'd to the greatest

heats, does not only qualifie the Intemperance of that Seaſon, but makes the Country alſo to be the moſt fruitful and delicious, that is to be found in the habitable World: The ſame is reported alſo of *Ganges*, and other Rivers of *India*. Nay, even in the Deſarts and ſcorching Plains of *Arabia*, how wonderfully has Nature provided for the exigence of Man by Camels, a Creature whoſe tender Hoof receives no injury from the burning Sands, and by being able to bear great Burthens, and to go ſeveral days without drinking, is moſt ſerviceable to Trâvellers, and ſuch as Trade in thoſe Parts, where any other Beaſt would inevitably periſh through want of Water.

Got. Arthus *his* Ind. Orient. *c.* 6.

What is reported of *Ferraria*, an Iſland belonging to the *Canaries*, ſeems miraculous; the Soil of it is as dry and uncultivated as can any where be ſeen, inſomuch that not a drop of freſh Water can be found any where, unleſs ſome few Springs upon the Sea Coaſt, from whence the Inhabitants can have no benefit, by reaſon of too great a diſtance, which want is ſtrangely reliev'd by God, there growing in the midſt of the Iſle a certain Tree of no great bulk, and always green, the like whereof is to be found no where in the Univerſe. The Tree is continually

tinually envelop'd with a thick Mist or Cloud, ſuch as does neither diminiſh nor increaſe; from the Leaves whereof, which are long in ſhape like thoſe of a Wallnut-Tree, there diſtills perpetually ſuch a quantity of pure Chryſtal Water, as equals that of the moſt plentiful Springs; all which being receiv'd into Ciſterns and other Veſſels, ſerves the Occaſions of the whole Iſland, both for the Inhabitants and their Cattel. No leſs ſingular and beneficial is the Palm-tree, though more commonly known by its rare Benefits and Vertues, as affording excellent Wine, Fruits, Vinegar, Thread, and Leaves always green, and ſuch as ſerve for a durable covering to Houſes againſt all Injuries of the Weather; ſo that 'tis with juſt reaſon, that this Tree is made the Symbol of Vertue, not only for its fam'd Power of reſiſting whatſoever does oppoſe it, but for its ſingular Nature and Qualities, being ſuch as can ſupply all the Neceſſities of Life. If *Lumbardy* abound with rich Wines and Paſtures which the *Alpes* want, yet do theſe enjoy a cooler and more healthy Air; the poverty and barrenneſs of their Soil will never invite their Neighbours to make War upon them; and in caſe they ſhould be attack'd, their high Snowy

Rocks and Mountains would prove a good ſecurity againſt the Invaſion; ſo that the Peace of the one may ſeem more eligible than the Plenty of the other: We may obſerve, how the moſt barren Rocks and Mountains of the World are generally Rich with Marble, Ore, and many times with Chryſtal and Jewels of an inеſtimable value. We may obſerve alſo how the *Southern* Seas, though they are not ſo well ſtor'd with Fiſh as the *Northern*, yet do they abound with Coral and Pearls, which can in a manner purchaſe all other Riches.

In a word, whoſoever ſhall attentively ſurvey the Face of Nature from Pole to Pole, and from the riſing to the ſetting Sun, may eaſily diſcern, that whatſoever Inconveniencies any Place or Country is ſubject to, the ſame alſo doth enjoy ſome other Bleſſings equivalent to, or perhaps more beneficial than what they want; which cannot but proceed from the all Good and Wiſe Creator and Governour of the Univerſe; it being impoſſible, that ſo many and various Effects of Nature as lie before our Eyes, ſo Regular and Beautiful, ſo Curious and Uſeful, ſhould be the reſults of blind and undiſcerning Chance. Let Stones, Timber, Iron, with the other Materials of building,

be

be ſhuffled and toſs'd together for Millions of Ages, they will never fall into the Form and Figure of a Houſe; and yet the Works of Art fall exceeding ſhort of thoſe of Nature; how then can't be imagin'd, that this great Machine of the World, which conſiſts of infinite variety of things, the leaſt of which ſurpaſſes the Productions of the moſt Induſtrious and Ingenious Artiſts, and where all the Parts hold that Analogy and Conformity to one another, as makes one univerſal and perpetual harmony; I ſay, how is it poſſible, that all theſe things ſhould have their Original from Chance, and ſhould in ſuch an admirable manner be animated by Contingencies?

CHAP. VI.

Of the ſubſerviency of the Creatures or Parts of the World to one another.

THis ſubſerviency of things to one another, is a Point which deſerves our further Conſideration, as being that which does exceedingly illuſtrate the Wonders and Order of a Divine Providence. The Sun as it is in it ſelf the

moſt Glorious of all viſible Creatures, ſo is it the moſt Beneficial too, when we ſhall conſider a little, the wonderful Influence it has upon the Earth in its Courſe and Motion: For ſhould it keep conſtantly to one Circle, a great part of the Earth would be burnt up, whilſt the remoter Regions would be deſolate, and lie covered perpetually with Ice. But by the Wiſdom of God it is ſo order'd, that all Places in their due Seaſons enjoy the benign and comfortable Influence of this glorious Luminary of the Day; for by its declination ſometimes Northward, and ſometimes Southward, in a juſt and certain Courſe, it Creates that diſtinction of Seaſons through all the World, (*viz.* of Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter) by which the Earth is render'd Fruitful, and furniſh'd with all thoſe Bleſſings and Comforts which every Seaſon does produce: Which method, as it furniſhes every living Creature with all things neceſſary and delightful to its Nature, ſo is it moſt recreative to the Spirits both of Man and Beaſt; the withdrawing of the Sun being as neceſſary for their Refreſhment, by that reſt and ſleep which follows on the Night, as its bright and warm Appearance is uſeful to the fruitions of Life, and to the ſeveral Labours and Duties

Duties of the Day. How tir'd are we with the length perhaps of one Summers day? How unſupportable then would our Condition be, were we oblig'd to live but for a Month, perhaps in ſuch a Tenour and Courſe without Interruption? ſo that after the Heats and Parchings of Summer, Nature calls for the cool refreſhments of Winter, and theſe again prepare our Appetites to taſte the Pleaſures of the Spring; ſo that by this perpetual Circle and Counterchange of Seaſons, we are always in a round or progreſs, to be reliev'd by freſh Comforts, and deliver'd from the Inconveniencies which would follow, by being confin'd to one certain and unchangeable ſtate of Nature. The like Obſervation might be made of the Moon and of the other Planets, all which are no leſs ſerviceable to the Earth in their ſeveral Periods and Revolutions.

But to proceed; if we conſider that Tract of ſpace which lies betwixt the Heavens and the Earth, the Region of Clouds and Rain, of Winds and Thunder, we may obſerve likewiſe how uſeful theſe things are, though they ſeem to be nothing but the Excrementitious Crudities and Evaporations of Nature. It is to the Winds we owe that Attemperati-

on and Motion of the Air which is ſo conducing to Health; it is to the Winds we owe all the Bleſſings which are deriv'd from Navigation. Theſe Winds which ſeem to ſcatter where they blow, do Unite Nations in Alliance and Commerce, and convey to us whatſoever rarity is to be found in any part of the Earth. The Clouds by their interpoſition betwixt the Sun and us, ſhelter us from the Injuries of its hotter Beams; and by diſtilling Showers of Rain upon the Ground, do render it moſt verdant and fruitful: And even the Thunder, which in all Ages has been lookt on as the effect of an offended Deity, and to have ſomething in it of Terrour and Prodigy, is yet beneficial, by diſpelling thoſe aduſt and gloomy Vapours which are incident to the Summer Seaſons.

If we caſt our Eyes upon the Ocean, at the firſt aſpect it will appear to us to be a bottomleſs Gulf, of an unlimitted extent, moſt hideous in its roaring, breaking in upon the Earth with great violence, and threatning nothing but Inundation and Ruine; And yet this great Abyſs and Expanſe of Waters, beſides the infinite plenty and variety of Fiſh, with other things, with which it does abound, will upon a ſtricter view be found

found to be the great Medium, by which Traffick and all Civil Correſpondence is ſupported, and the ſureſt boundaries and ſecurity to Kingdoms; ſo that whilſt it threatens to overwhelm, it does ſecure us from the ſudden Irruptions of foreign Invaſion; and beſides, it is that great and inexhauſtible Treaſure of Springs and Fountains which ſupply the Earth, and adorn it with Beautiful and Navigable Rivers.

Some are of an Opinion, that Fountains have their Original from Rains, which falling from the higher Grounds, and meeting at laſt in ſome common Receptacle, make thoſe little Erruptions which we call Springs. This Opinion in ſome meaſure may be admitted, ſince we find that Springs dry up in times of great Drought, and then ſwell in times of Rain: But this is not the chief Cauſe of Fountains, for then the greateſt Springs would riſe in the lower Grounds; but we may obſerve generally, that they iſſue from the Sides, and ſometimes from the Tops of Mountains, where there cannot be ſuch ſtores of collected Water, and where the Surface of the Earth is dry and barren; and where there is little or no over-hanging Ground, from whence ſuch Fountains may fall, and be continued

ed in ſuch a conſtant Current. They are deriv'd therefore from the Sea, from whence through the whole Bowels of the Earth there are a vaſt Number of ſubterraneous Channels or minute Paſſages (reſembling the Pores and Veins of the Body,) into which theſe Waters are receiv'd, and through which they run; where meeting with thoſe ſulphureous Heats which occur every where through the Entrails of the Earth, they are rarefied and aſcend (like the Vapours in a Limbeck) through all its Concavities and Veins, till meeting with the cold Air, which generally reſides on Mountains and in the Caverns of Rocks, they are there condens'd into Drops, which by diſtilling from the tops of theſe Grotto's, as from the Head of an Alimbeck, trickle down, and meeting in great Numbers, create theſe little Currents, which at length forming a Paſſage through the ſides of the ſame Mountain, is that which we call Springs: Theſe Springs meeting together in greater numbers are form'd into Rivers, repleniſh'd with all variety of Fiſh; by which Rivers alſo the Earth is water'd and defended, and Commodities are convey'd from Place to Place with great eaſe and ſafety; all which Rivers keeping on their Courſe into the Ocean from whence

whence they came, make a perpetual Circulation, and become the richeſt helps to Nature.

If we conſider the Earth on which we ſtand, we ſhall find the ſame Correſpondence and Harmony betwixt the ſeveral Parts and Regions of it: The Northern Quarters of the World, as *Sweden*, *Denmark*, *Norway* and *Muſcovy*, though they be deſtitute of rich Wines and fat Paſtures, abound with tall Trees fit for building, as alſo with Maſts, Pitch, Tar, (which are the things ſo neceſſary to Navigation) together with Iron, Braſs and Copper, which are the Metals ſo abſolutely uſeful in Peace and War, and which do in effect Command the World. Some Countries abound chiefly with Corn, others again with Wine, and others are proper only for Paſturage; ſo that the Wants of the one are not only ſuppliable by the Plenty of the other, but there is a certain kind of Alliance made by Nature betwixt Country and Country, from the Neceſſities they are under of being ſupply'd by one another. And even theſe Parts which of all others ſeem moſt deſtitute of the Bleſſings of Nature (as enjoying neither the Fertility of the Land, nor are yet ſecure from the Violence and Inundation of the Sea,

but

but ſeem moſt expos'd to Dangers and Inconveniencies from both, by lying upon the Sand and Waſh, and open to the Winds) are by Divine Care and Providence made the Richeſt and the moſt Beautiful Treaſures of the World, as appears by *Venice*, and the Maritime Parts of the Low Countries, which Places do not only by their Commerce enrich themſelves and others to a Prodigy, but are alſo of that Power and Strength, as the greateſt Policy and Force are not able to ſubdue them.

The grand Objection againſt God's Providence in the Government of Nature, is taken from ſome irregularities which uſually occur in the Courſe of things. The Hopes and Expectations of a fruitful Spring, are many times fruſtrated by ſome unſeaſonable Winds or Blaſts; or by the ſudden inundation of a River: We obſerve frequently whole Countries to be overwhelm'd by the flowing in of the Sea; and fair Cities to be buried in Ruins by an Earth-quake. What Wrecks and Miſeries do ariſe at Sea from the Violence of Tempeſts and Hurricanes? What havock is there made frequently at Land amongſt Trees, and Edifices by the fury of Winds? Many Places have been ruin'd by Eruptions of Fire;

Fire; and whole Kingdoms have been brought to the utmoſt Extremity by Peſtilence. To this I anſwer:

Firſt, That thoſe ſeeming Irregularities are very few and inconſiderable, when we reflect upon the whole Courſe and Syſtem of Nature, and do no more derogate from the Care and Wiſdom of Almighty God, than the little Flaws and Blemiſhes we ſee uſually in the Stones of the nobleſt Fabricks, do detract from the Art and Ingenuity of the Architect: ſo that a building may be Beautiful, and hold an exact Sympathy in all its parts, though there may be found ſome Wormholes in the Timber, or here and there a Stone not ſo exactly poliſh'd.

In the next place; The forementioned Irregularities, whatſoever they ſeem to be, are not yet of ſo great damage, but that the Benefit which attends them is many times greater. If the Labour and Expectation of the Induſtrious Husbandman be ſubject to Caſualties, the Reſidue will ever carry a greater Price, and ſtir up greater diligence; which in the end makes a full return: whereas Years of greateſt Plenty bring down the Fruits and Productions of the Earth to a low rate, and do both nouriſh Idleneſs, and tend to ſurfeit. If Fruitful Meadows be for a time

time waſted by the diſorders of a Flood, yet the Injury is recompens'd by the rich Mud and Fatneſs it leaves upon the Earth; by which it becomes afterwards more Fertile and Luxuriant. The Countries which are moſt expos'd to the Irruptions of the Sea, are drawn by ſuch Misfortunes to truſt to their Ships; and by that means alſo become the wealthieſt Traders in the World. If Earth-quakes and Tempeſts ſubvert Houſes ſometimes; ſo by looſning the Roots of Trees, they exceedingly contribute to the furtherance and Perfection of Nature, and many times diſcover new Treaſures. If ſtrong Winds be ſometimes injurious, yet are they as profitable to us, not only by diſſipating thoſe Smells and Vapours, which many times infect the Air, but are generally the Forerunners of great Serenity. The Places which are moſt ſubject to Sulphureous Eruptions are enrich'd by the Aſhes: And even the Peſtilence it ſelf, ſo great a ſlaughter as it ſeems to make of Mankind, is generally ſucceeded with Healthful Seaſons: For by ripening the Diſeaſes and Corruptions of Nature, and by drawing them into one common Sore or Iſſue, it leaves no Tabifick Matter or tainted Humours for future Diſeaſes to feed upon.

But in the laſt place; Whatſoever Diſaſters there be, which proceed from theſe and ſuch like Irregularities, they do not argue any Interruption or Defect in Nature, foraſmuch as they are derived from certain and natural Cauſes, tho they be detrimental ſometimes and hurtful to Men; ſo that they are rather to be look'd upon as Puniſhments, than as Vices and Infirmities of Nature; the Equity of which Proceedings betwixt God and Man will be more fully ſtated by and by.

CHAP. VII.

Of Divine Providence in reſpect of Human Affairs in General.

THus much briefly of Nature in General, and of the ſubſerviency of things to one another: Proceed we in the next place to diſcourſe of Gods Providence in relation to the Operations and Occurrences of Man; and this under a Two-fold Capacity: Firſt, Publick, in reſpect of Greater Bodies, or Civil Communities. Secondly, Special and Particular, as relating to the Actions and Courſe of

of every individual Perſon. Moreover, the Notion of Providence is Two-fold; the firſt is natural, by which God provides all things neceſſary for the Life and Suſtenance of Man. The ſecond is Moral; which may more properly be called Previding, being no other than the ſecret End propos'd by God for his concurrence with Man in all his Actions; which be they never ſo Irregular, Unjuſt, or Vicious from the Evil Ends propos'd by Men, are by the Divine Power and Wiſdom, made to be the Inſtruments of Good beyond the Intention of ſecond Cauſes. Prophane Story is not ſo apt to illuſtrate this Point as Sacred Writ; for Inſtance: The End propos'd by *Jacob*'s Sons in ſelling *Joſeph* was Revenge, God concurs with them in this Action, but upon other Ends, deſigning to make this unjuſt Act of theirs to become an Inſtrument for their Preſervation, as appears from the wonderful Accidents throughout the whole Courſe of that Hiſtory; which Paſſage alſo was a Type of what befell our Lord and Saviour, who was villainouſly ſold, betray'd, and barbarouſly put to death by the Jews, to all which God concurs, making this wicked Act of theirs to be the ſole Means for ſaving thoſe Murderers, and all the World beſides,

besides, by that Atonement which was made for their Sins by the Precious Blood of his only Son. This Method is most Consonant to the Nature of God, it being impossible there should be any greater Demonstration of his Divine Power and Goodness, than to be able to convert Poison into a Cordial, and to procure safety out of that which would naturally be our ruin.

But that we may the better understand the Cause and Reasonableness of God's Operations with Men, I must leave my ordinary Road a little, and take up with the obscure Traces and Niceties of Metaphysicks; by premising some few Propositions, which like the *Postulata* or *Axioms* in the Mathematicks must be taken for granted for the present, to avoid the long Digressions and Perplexities which would follow upon a particular Proof of each of them. And, 1. God from all Eternity foresees all future Actions of Men, his Omniscience being a Noble Attribute and Branch of his Divine Nature. 2. This Fore-knowledge of God (tho' it imply a certainty of the Action) does not lay a necessity upon the Agent, no more than my fore-knowledge of the Sun's rising to morrow Morning is a necessary Cause of the Course and Rising of that

Glorious Creature. 3. That God's influence upon the Actions of Men, is either Phyſical or Moral: Phyſical, for as much as he by his Power is the Preſerver of every Creature in its Being and Operations, and this Power extends it ſelf to all the Actions of Men, whether Natural or Spontaneous. 2. Moral, by propoſing Rewards and Puniſhments, as Motives to excite or to diſſwade from Action, adding ſometimes his Poſitive and Revealed Commands, together with his aſſiſting Grace, by the impulſe of his Holy Spirit; but this is a Point which more properly concerns Divinity. 4. That God has given Man a freedom of Will, *viz.* a Power to chooſe or diſlike upon the apprehenſions he has of Objects: for Man otherwiſe would be nothing but a meer Machine, all whoſe Motions whether Regular or Irregular, Good or Evil, would be nothing but the contrivance and direction of its Maker, and would be reputed all for the Acts of Man, becauſe God is pleas'd to produce them in his Preſence; which is all one as to ſay, that the Feracity of the Garden is an Act of the Water-pots, becauſe the Water does run through it, by which the Gardner does revive his Flowers. 5. That the apprehenſion which Man has

of

of Objects, upon which he forms his Acts of choice or diſlike, being many times clouded by Ignorance, or miſguided by Irregular Paſſions, is that which betrays him to the commiſſion of Evil. 6. The Perpetration of which Evil is no further forth the Act of God, than that Man in his Exiſtence, and conſequently in his Operations, muſt depend upon the Conſerving Power of his Creator; ſo that God can no more be ſaid to be the Cauſe of Sin, than the Sea, whoſe Nature 'tis extinguiſh Fire, can be ſaid to be the Cauſe of the burning and ruin of ſome Cities, for as much as it ſupports and carries up the Ships, from whence came the Bombs and Fire-works which did the miſchief. From whence it follows alſo, that the commiſſion of Sin is a Moral Action, terminated in ſomething forbidden, which may be underſtood either of the Internal Act of the Will, propoſing a bad Object, or a bad End; or elſe of the External Action or Execution, which whether it contain any thing poſitive in its Nature, is with great nicety diſputed; ſome diſtinguiſhing betwixt the materiality of the Action, and the formality or obliquity, which is nothing but the regard which the Action has to an unlawful Object. The former

mer they make to be Positive, the other a mere Privative, though this latter seem'd a little difficult : For Instance, this or that particular Act of murder, whether intended or executed, does receive its Individuality and Being from the Object on which 'tis terminated; so that this particular Act or Action it self, is nothing else but the very Termination on such an undue Object, and in which consists, they say, the very formality and obliquity of Sin. In the last Place, this propensity in Actions, whether Good or Evil, whatsoever it be, is not of the Nature of a Creature, since even by divine Power it cannot subsist of it self (it being impossible there should be such a thing as a Thought, without something which thinks, and something which is thought upon; or an Action without an Agent and an Object :) It is therefore of the Nature of a Relation, which can be said only to have an improper and denominative Reality, for as much as the Terms related are real Things.

From these Points thus premised, some Rational answer may be given to such Difficulties as shall occur in our further Consideration of Divine Providence over Human Actions : Resuming therefore the distribution which I made in the

the beginning of this Chapter, we are firſt to conſider God's Providence in Relation to greater Bodies or Civil Communities, or as it extends it ſelf to the Eſtabliſhment and Revolutions of Kingdoms. To prove this, we need no more, but to reflect upon the Nature and Attributes of God, who, as it hath been already demonſtrated, is Omnipotent, and gives Life and Power to every Creature in all its Motions and Tendencies.

As for *Epicurus* his Reaſonings they are fooliſh, when he endeavours to ſhew, that it is beneath the Grandure of a Deity to concern it ſelf in the Tranſactions of Men, and that the Multiplicity and Contrariety of Occurrences would be an interruption to that Tranquility which is ſo eſſential to that happy ſtate, where there is nothing but quiet and ſerenity. Theſe Notions of *Epicurus*, ſo ſoft and gentle, ſo ſmooth and inchanting, would ſuit well with the *Elyſium* of the Poets, or the Sultaneſſes of the *Seraglio*; but will by no means conſiſt with the meaſures of Philoſophy, nor yet with the Maxims of Temporal Princes, from whence they ſeem to borrow their falſe and fading Colours. For amongſt the Grandees of the Earth, thoſe were ever accounted the

greateſt Heroes who were moſt active, as *Hercules*, *Alexander*, *Cæſar*, and the reſt; whilſt ſuch as abandon'd themſelves to Eaſe, Idleneſs and Tranquility, were moſt unhappy in their Government, and in the cloſe of their Lives expos'd to ſhame and ruin, and their Memories render'd infamous to all future Ages. A good Prince ought, if it were poſſible, to know the Neceſſities of every Subject of his in particular, and to relieve and protect him; which ſince he cannot do, being himſelf of a Finite Nature, and circumſcrib'd by his own Perſonal and Domeſtick Exigencies, it is his Duty to execute this Power by his Deputies and Miniſters, with their ſubordinate and inferiour Officers, which, if they prove Diligent, Juſt, and Men of Underſtanding, Courage and Experience, they cannot but render a Prince Glorious and Happy: And upon this Account it is, that Kings are call'd God's Vicegerents, and ſometimes gods themſelves, not from a ſupream and voluptuous Repoſe, or a reſty State and Majeſty, but from their Civil Omnipreſence and Ubiquity, by which, like Gods, they can do infinite things at once, and be beneficial to all, by the aſſiſtance and influence of their under-Agents and Miniſters. From hence

hence then, that God is the Sovereign Monarch of the Universe, and most happy and glorious in his Station, it follows with Congruity, or rather with Necessity, that he must have a particular care of the Affairs of his Creatures; nor need he under-Officers to do this, being by his Nature present to all Places; nor can the multiplicity of Affairs obstruct or distract a Power which is Omnipotent, and where the Execution is nothing but Volition.

'Tis true, God does sometime upon extraordinary Occasions, and in an extraordinary manner use the Ministry of Angels; nay even of men in some Transactions, by giving them a supernatural Virtue to work Miracles, and this he does to demonstrate his greater Power, in like manner, as it would demonstrate a greater skill in a Master of Rhetorick, to make a stammering Ideot deliver an Harangue with good Grace and Articulation, than to pronounce the same himself, though according to the best Precepts and Gestures of Art.

From the Dictates of Reason pass we on to the Practice of Nations; and here we shall find through all Ages of the World, how the wisest and greatest Governments did ever acknowledge their

Welfare and dependance upon a Supernatural and Providential Power. The *Romans*, and before them the *Greeks*, thoſe great Maſters of Learning and Empire, in all their weightieſt Conſultations whether of War or Peace, ſought ever to make Heaven Propitious, or at leaſt to underſtand its Will and Inclinations, by Conſulting of Oracles, by Victims, and by obſerving the Rites and Inſtitutions of their Augurs; which Cuſtoms of theirs, though in many things ſuperſtitious, and converſant about falſe Gods, ſhew'd however the univerſal Belief they had of ſome Deity or Deities, which Preſided over and Govern'd all their Undertakings. And in a further Teſtimony of their Perſwaſion and Gratitude, they offer'd Hecatombs, erected Temples, hung up Votive Tables repreſenting the Benefits they receiv'd from Heaven, and inſtituted Anniverſary Games and Feaſts, with other Monuments, by which they labour'd to Celebrate and Perpetuate the Memory of ſuch Bleſſings. And upon this account alſo 'twas, that Providence was alſo repreſented (as in the Money of *Antoninus Pius*) by the Image of *Janus*, looking backwards and forwards, towards paſt and future Things: But in the Medals of *Hadrian* ſhe is figur'd

gur'd as a Goddeſs, holding a Rod in her Right Hand, with a Globle at her Feet, Symbolizing thereby, that the World is ſubject to her, and govern'd by her Power.

All the Ancients, whether Poets or Philoſophers, believ'd a Providence, excepting *Epicurus*: 'Tis true, *Lucian* ſhews himſelf an Epicure in nothing more than this, witneſs his *Jupiter Tragœdus*, where in a diſputation held by *Timocles* and *Dames* before the Gods, he concludes with the *Epicurean* againſt the *Stoicks*, in the denial of a Providence; and yet in another Place, in the Perſon of *Menippus*, he does expreſly ſay, that every one ſhall be judg'd according to the Actions of his Life, which cannot be unleſs the Gods be allow'd to have an Inſpection over them. But 'tis not to be wonder'd, that ſome ſhould be Heterodox in the deductions of Speculation: Hence we have Inſtances of others who have deny'd the Evidence of Senſe. For *Zeno* deny'd Motion, *Democritus* Station, and a Third, That the Snow was white; which ſingular Extravagancies of Scepticiſm may by no means come in Competition with much the Plurality, nor evacuate the Authority of thoſe, who being infinitely more in number, and upon the moſt

Lucian dial. inter Charon, &c.

moſt certain Demonſtrations have evinc'd the contrary.

Upon this Conſideration 'tis that all Publick Changes and Alterations of Government, though attended with general and fatal Calamities, are manag'd by Providence, for as much as God propoſeth Ends of Good; either Firſt, By making them Puniſhments for Sin; or Secondly, uſing them as means to draw Mens Affections from Temporal Things: Or Laſtly, by propounding ſome other ſecret ways for the declaration of his own Glory. But whatſoever Motive there be on God's Part, certain 'tis, that their Effects iſſue from a Combination of Natural Cauſes, and do proceed either from the Ignorance of Counſellors, from the Corruption of Officers, from Factions at home, and from Confederacies abroad; all which, and many ſuch Defects, are the ordinary Symptoms of a declining State. Nevertheleſs, there are Eyes too in this Wheel of Fortune, which like that of a Watch, has its Motion viſible to all, whilſt the Spring by which it moves lies unſeen.

And yet it cannot be deny'd, but that Providence by ſome extraordinary Accidents, and in a way Supernatural, does ſometimes manifeſt it ſelf; and of this we have

have Examples in prophane Story. The *Greeks* in *Homer* were not ignorant hereof; who when their Army was deſtroy'd by Peſtilence, ſent *Ulyſſes* with Hecatombs to *Thebes*, and deſir'd *Chryſes* to intercede for them with *Apollo*: *Diodorus Siculus* makes it out, that the Prodigious Earthquakes and Inundations in *Peloponneſus*, in the Fourth year of the Hundred and firſt *Olympiad*, were caus'd by the Gods, for the Puniſhment of Mens Impieties. The change of Temporal Succeſs and Fortune is many times ſo ſudden, and ſo much againſt the Stream and Current of preſent Opportunities, that we muſt confeſs there is an over-ruling Providence, that does blaſt the Purpoſes and preſent Advantages of Men; witneſs *Imillo* General of the *Carthagenian* Army, who having ſubdu'd all *Sicily* excepting *Syracuſe*, which was upon Terms alſo of Surrender; after he had robb'd the Temples of *Ceres* and *Proſerpina*, ſoon felt the ſmart of his Sacrilegious Villainy; for immediately the Plague brake into his Camp, of which there dyed 50000, He himſelf being put to a moſt ſhameful flight, return'd inglorious into his Country, and execrated by all; who when he had frequented the Temples in the vileſt Apparel, and acknowledg'd Heavens Juſtice

Diod. lib. 17. Hiſt.

Diodorus lib. 14. Bibl. Hiſt.

ſtice in puniſhing his own Impieties, concluded his wretched Life by a voluntary Famine. I confeſs, we do not every where meet with Inſtances of this Nature; but yet we may obſerve in the Courſe of Providence ſome unexpected Iſſues, by which the meaneſt Inſtruments, and upon the greateſt diſadvantages, are carried on by they know not what kind of *Impetus* to the compaſſing of great Deſigns; whilſt others upon the greateſt aſſiſtance of preſent Means, and the encouragement of paſt Succeſs, are dampt in the Execution, and in the very heat of things find a qualm. Such Accidents, or ſeeming Irregularities, are by moſt aſcrib'd to Fortune, to they know not what confluence of lucky Circumſtances, when yet they ſeem to be the greateſt Proofs of a ſuperlative Energy and Wiſdom, to be able to produce ſuch ſtrange Effects out of ſo obſcure and ſmall Beginnings; like what we obſerve in the Mathematicks, where the Wiſdom of the firſt Inventor is ſeen from hence, that from a few ordinary and common Principles, and obvious to the meaneſt Capacities, are rais'd ſuch mighty Theorems, as raviſh the moſt Maſculine Underſtandings in the Contemplation of them: And as in theſe, ſo alſo in the

progreſs

progress of Providential Dispensations, though they seem abstruse at first, yet after we have dwelt a little on them, we see the reliance of such Consequences upon their Antecedents in the Connexion, which runs through the whole Choire of Causes. It is not usual with God in his Providential Regimen, to unhinge Secondary and Natural Causes each from other: No, he does from all Eternity foresee Events, and must therefore penetrate the most retired Thoughts, and preside over the most retir'd and deepest Consultations; which though they be of Evil Consequence to us, as being executed by wicked Instruments, yet to him who sits above, they are design'd as Chastisements for past, and Terrours for future Provocations, and are the Effects therefore not only of his Justice, but of his Mercy also.

For our fuller understanding this Point, there is one difficulty which seems to obstruct our progress in this Argument, and 'tis this: If Alterations and Revolutions of Government be manag'd by the disposition of divine Providence, then is it not a Sin to comply with God in such his Purposes? Nay, rather we are oblig'd thereto, since 'tis the Duty of every Man to endeavour the

the accompliſhment of that by which God deſigns his own Glory. This Notion has been the Pillar of Rebellion, the Divine Palladium, or rather the *Trojan* Horſe, from whence came the Conflagration and Ruine almoſt of this Kingdom. In the ſolution whereof I ſhall obſerve Three Degrees of Divine Providence: The Firſt is that, by which God, as the Creator and Preſerver of the Univerſe, concurs indifferently to the Actions of his Creatures: The Second is that, by which he does ſo diſpoſe of Accidents, and in a Natural way, as to make them uſeful to the Purpoſes of Men, which yet could never have been foreſeen by any human Sagacity: What is more uncertain than the Weather, yet what Succeſs has follow'd in point of War, when the Enemy, upon the Inconveniencies of Rain, has found the Progreſs of his Fortune bounded by the Inundations of a River, or by the Diſeaſes caus'd by too immoderate wet in the continuance of a Siege. The Third and Laſt Degree of Providence is that, when by ſome Supernatural and Miraculous way, a diſpleaſure is declar'd from Heaven againſt the Proceedings of Men; now to apply theſe Caſes to our preſent Purpoſe. As for the Laſt, Men without controverſie are not

concern'd

concern'd herein, ſuch Effects being ſuppos'd to proceed in a way Supernatural, and from the immediate Hand of God; or if their Concurrence were requir'd, they might act their Parts ſecurely no doubt, it being impoſſible for God to work a Miracle for the compaſſing of a ſinful Action: But this cannot concern the Objection, becauſe we ſee no Kingdoms now deſtroy'd by Miracles: Nor is the Firſt Caſe of moment, becauſe God does no more than what the Exigencies of Finite Creatures, require of him as their Creator; that is, his ordinary Concurrence with them ſo far, as they depend upon him in all their Actions, whether Good or Evil; and therefore the Rebel has no better a Plea for the Succeſs he meets with than the Murderer, ſince God affords his ordinary and general Concurrence indifferently to both. The ſtreſs then of ſuch Pretences muſt lie upon the Second Method, *viz.* When by an immediate Contribution of Natural Cauſes, God ſhews himſelf more favourable to one ſide than the other; but this can be no good Argument, unleſs I knew that there were an immediate and ſpecial Influence of God therein concern'd. Secondly, admitting this were known, yet unleſs we knew the Mind of God,

God, and ſo propoſe the ſame End, we can have no aſſurance that what we do is Juſt, ſince the ſame Action, according to the ſeveral Ends propos'd, becomes qualified with different Formalities of Good and Evil.

But to ſhew the Abſurdity of thoſe who maintain God's Secret Will in oppoſition to his Reveal'd; and according to our Modern Language, own God as King, *i. e.* fight againſt him in one Capacity to preſerve him in another: I ſhall obſerve firſt; That Politick Power in General is immediately from God, as being founded upon the Law of Nature: For whether Men will or no, they muſt be Govern'd ſome way; ſince, to the Conſervation of human Race, 'tis neceſſary that men ſhould be ſecure from the violence of Oppreſſors; but no man can be ſecure, but by flying to ſome Body who is Superiour to him who offers Violence; and Superiour he muſt be either by ſtrength of Arms or by Authority: Should private Queſtions and Quarrels be decided by Strength, the World would quickly fall to Pieces; it remains therefore, that Recourſe muſt be had to one who is Supream in point of Authority and Command. In the next Place, 'tis indiſputable, that this or that kind

of

of Government *in Specie*, whether Monarchy, Ariſtocracy, or the like, is not *De jure Naturæ*, and from God immediately; but by the conſent of the People intervening: For by the Law of Nature no Man has Right to rule more than another: but when Men for their own private Quiet and Security do diveſt themſelves of that Power, by conferring it on a common Repreſentative: Or when Kingdoms got by Uſurpation, in tract of time become Lawful Governments, the Concurrence of the People being won over by degrees. In theſe Caſes, ſo far as they reſign their Power, ſo far have they made themſelves Subjects: and therefore if an Uſurper acquire the Power *de facto*, this cannot be ſaid to be from God, ſince the Conſent of the People, which is *de Jure Naturæ*, cannot be reſum'd and transferr'd upon any ſucceeding Capacity, as long as that's in being on which they conferr'd their Right at firſt.

CHAP. VIII.

Of God's Influence on Human Actions.

AND here I muſt beg my Readers leave to digreſs a little from the Method I propos'd, *viz.* Not to meddle with Arguments of Sacred Authority, till ſuch time as by the Thread of this Diſcourſe I ſhould be brought to ſpeak of reveal'd Religion, and particularly the Chriſtian: But ſo it is, that I cannot make any further Progreſs, till ſuch time as ſome Difficulties be remov'd, which ſeem to obviate our intended Method, under an appearance of being founded (or to ſpeak more properly confounded) in God's Providential Order. For whoſoever ſhall look back a little upon the Government of the late Uſurper, cannot but meet with many pretended Luminaries, I ſhould ſay Incendiaries, of thoſe times, who endeavour'd to father the Revolution upon God's ſingular and gracious Providence; and ſo making it to be of Divine Authority. And becauſe ſuch Revolutions may happen again, it will not be amiſs to examine this Doctrine by the Weights and Meaſures of the Sanctuary: and that we may do this, it will be

be proper to enquire a little (as far as our ſhallow Reaſon will permit) into the manner of God's Operations in the Minds, and with the Actions of Men.

That we may underſtand the Queſtion therefore aright, I ſhall premiſe Two Things: Firſt, That I ſhall not in this place diſcourſe of Evangelical Works or Graces, but of Moral Duties; nor yet of ſuch as are morally good, but of ſuch rather as are morally bad, and of the Cauſes from whence they riſe. In the next place, that in regard to Human Actions, the efficient Cauſes are of Two ſorts: Firſt, Phyſical, or ſuch by which the ſubſtance or matter of the Action (as I may ſay with leave from Logick) is produc'd. There is alſo another kind of efficient Cauſe, and that is Moral; as where one invites another to an Action by propoſing a Reward; or by counſelling, or exciting his Will and Affections to make ſuch a Choice: Alſo the final Cauſe, (which is term'd by ſome the Objective) comes under this denomination; foraſmuch as the End or Object in all Animal and Human Actions, does influence the Action, and excite, move, and by a kind of ſecret force impell him to act for the obtaining of ſuch an End or Object.

Now for the Phyſical Influence of God on Human Actions, it is no way to be doubted that he concurs to them; foraſmuch as being the Creator of all things, they cannot act without him: but this kind of influence is general, and regards all Human Actions, not as good or bad, but purely as the Actions of his Creatures; like the influence of the Sun which indifferently ſhines upon the Earth, and ſerves to nouriſh and to mature hurtful as well as wholſome Plants. The ſtreſs then of the Queſtion is converſant about a moral Agency, as whether God does excite the Will and Affections to ſinful Actions by impelling them thereunto, by propoſing undue Objects, or by obſtructing them from making any other choice.

The Great Doctor and Divine of his time, and who drew great numbers after him, *John Calvin*, ſeems to have laid the Foundation of thoſe many Erroneous Opinions touching Providence, in ſome bold and Heterodox Aſſertions of God's being the Author and firſt Mover of Man to all ſinful Actions; denying him not only a liberty of doing good, but of declining Evil; ſo that whatſoever Sin any man commits, does not proceed from the man's own free Choice, (for then he might have declin'd it,) but from a Predeter-

determination in God, who does actually excite him to the commiſſion of it. This he profeſſedly and ſtrenuouſly affirms in teaching, *That Men do nothing but by the ſecret Approbation of God: nor act any thing with deliberation, but what he himſelf hath before decreed, and by his ſecret Direction hath conſtituted, as is fully proved by innumerable and clear Teſtimonies:* And a little before he ſaith, *It may ſeem abſurd perhaps, that by the Will and Command of God a Man ſhould be made blind; for which blindneſs he afterwards ſuffers puniſhment: this they endeavour to evade, by ſaying, That is done by the Permiſſion, not by the Will of God; but whilſt God declares openly, that he himſelf does it, this Evaſion is baffled.* Likewiſe ſpeaking of the *Aſſyrians*, whom God made uſe of for the Chaſtiſement of *Judah*, he ſays, *They were impell'd by the Will and Appointment of God: I confeſs* (ſays he) *God many times acts in the Reprobate, by making uſe alſo of Satan's Labour; but yet ſo far only as 'tis permitted to Satan to move in it by the impulſe of God!* O ſtrange! we had thought that Satan had been forward enough of himſelf to tempt us to Sin, and that he needed not to be puſhed on to it by God! But to proceed; he exempts Satan from being any other than

Calv lib. 1. Inſtitut. c. 18. Sect. 1.

Ibid. Sect. 2.

the Tool or Inſtrument which God makes uſe of to effect wicked purpoſes. It is ſaid, (2 *Cor.* 4.) continueth *Calvin*, *That Satan, or the God of this World hath blinded the Minds of thoſe who believe not: but how can this be, unleſs the efficacy of the Error proceed from God?* And in this Senſe 'tis that *Calvin* expounds that place of St. *Paul*, (2 *Theſ.* 2.) *That the Efficacy of Error, or of being ſeduc'd, was infus'd by God, to the end that they might believe a Lye, who obeyed not the truth*: And in this Senſe alſo 'tis that he explains that Paſſage of the Fourteenth of *Ezekiel*; *And if a Prophet be deceiv'd when he hath ſpoken a thing, I the Lord have deceived that Prophet.*

Lib. 2. Inſt. cap. 4.

Lib. 1. Inſt. cap. 18. Sect. 2.

As for Examples, he produces that of *Shimei*'s curſing *David*; of *Abſalom*'s lying with his Father's Concubines; of the lying Spirit which deceiv'd the Prophets, and by them *Ahab*, to the end he might periſh at *Ramoth-Gilead*; of Satan's miſuſing *Job*, with many other Paſſages of the like Nature; all which he pretends to have proceeded effectually from God; and that the Devil was only the Inſtrument, as was ſaid before, to execute what God had commanded. And to prevent that Anſwer which Divines commonly make to ſuch Objections, *viz.* That God may be ſaid to harden the Hearts of Men, and

and to infatuate and darken their Underſtandings and Minds, by withdrawing his Spirit and Grace, and to leave Men to their natural blindneſs and imperfection: This he rejects as unſound, ſtanding ſtiffly to his Doctrine, to wit, *That God, by the help of Satan, does deſtine the Counſels of wicked Men as he pleaſes; and that he does excite their Wills, and confirm and ſtrengthen them in their Purpoſes.* Lib. 2. Inſt. Cap. 4. Sect. 3. And for thoſe who are of another Opinion, he looks upon them as Blaſphemers, who ſpit their Venom againſt Heaven; adding withal, that this is no new thing, ſince in all Ages there have been wicked and prophane Men, *Qui adverſus hanc Doctrinæ partem ore rabido latrarent*; which Language of his is ſo virulent and unchriſtian like, that I know not how to make it *Engliſh*. Lib. 1. Inſt. Cap. 18. Sect. ult. And to conclude this Chapter, ſays *Calvin*, If it ſhall ſeem difficult to any what we now aſſert, to wit, That there is no Agreement of God with Man, when Man by the juſt *Impulſe of God does that which is not lawful for him to do*, he cryes out: *Who can forbear trembling at the Judgments of God, who works in the Hearts of Men whatſoever he will*! More juſtly may we cry out, Who can forbear trembling to hear ſuch deſperate Doctrine! 'Tis true, he

denies every where that God is the cauſe of Sin; but whether that which I have cited out of him, and which was delivered by him, not occaſionally, but *ex profeſſo*, be not a proof of his making God to be the cauſe of Sin, I know not what can ever be proved upon the Earth; and if he contradicts himſelf, let thoſe who follow him look to that; he ſeeming in this Particular to be an Example of that Judgment which he ſo often aſcribes to God, of being deliver'd over in *Reprobum ſenſum*, or of having the Eyes of his Underſtanding darkned.

And thus much for the Doctrine of *Calvin*, whom I ſhall forbear to treat with that ſcurrilous Language he ſo freely beſtows on thoſe who differ from him in Opinion upon this Point. He was certainly a learned Man, and of a ſtrict Life, and ſevere; but withal of a moſt moroſe and ſour Diſpoſition; moſt vexatious, furious, and obſtinate, (as are all thoſe who follow him) moſt opiniative of himſelf; a Vilifier of ſuch as deſerted from him; and as to what concerns the Point in queſtion, his Doctrine is little leſs than Blaſphemy: For according to this Doctrine, Man is made a meer ſtupid, dead, and Paſſive Principle: and Free Grace is built upon the greateſt Simili-

militude of which a Rational Nature is capable, (if ſo be it be capable thereof,) a neceſſity to Sin.

But God has given us faculties to diſcriminate betwixt Good and Evil, and Abilities alſo to arbitrate upon them: To what purpoſe otherwiſe are all thoſe Menaces, Exhortations, and Prohibitions, ſo frequently us'd and inſiſted on in Scripture? What meaneth the Spirit of God when we are required *to do good, and eſchew evil; to repent us of our ſinful ways, and to turn unto the Lord; to put on the Armour of God, and to withſtand the Wiles of the Devil, and to work out our Salvation with fear and trembling*? For if ſo be I have not a power to obey theſe Injunctions, How is it that God commands me to do that which is impoſſible, and yet puniſhes the non-performance with Eternal Death? This is all one, as if a General ſhould bind his Soldiers Hands and Feet, and having done ſo, require him to riſe up, to apply himſelf to his Service, and to combat the Enemy, and then execute the man for not executing his Commands. Beſides, ſuppoſing the Will to be thus impotent and deprav'd, might not the Sinner thus interrogate his Soul; Why am I thus ſollicitous to withſtand the Aſſaults of the Devil? Why do I thus tire

tire and weary out my ſelf with vain Endeavours? Why do I embitter the Pleaſures and Enjoyments of my Life with Grief and Anxiety, when it lies not in my own power to remove my Fear? Nay, might not the Reprobate thus expoſtulate with God, as *Soſtratus* in *Lucian* did with *Minos*; Seeſt thou not with what Injuſtice thou art chargeable, who haſt doom'd me to everlaſting Miſery, being ſubſervient and inſtrumental only in thoſe Evils which Fate had predefin'd; and yet thou rewardeſt others with Happineſs, who are no other than the Diſpenſers of that Good, to which the guidance of their unalterable Decrees had pre-ordain'd them? Was there not the ſame Neceſſity in both? why then is there ſuch inequality in the Sentence? Theſe and ſuch like prodigious Blaſphemies are the Natural, or rather the Unnatural Conſequences of this Doctrine.

'Tis true; if we look back on man, as in a ſtate of Nature, and as under the deprivation of that Primitive Perfection with which he was once inveſted, he has no Abilities of himſelf to fulfil the Will of God, nor perform thoſe Chriſtian Duties which are requir'd of him, unleſs he be firſt illuminated by God's Holy Spirit, quicken'd with his Grace, and

and encouraged by the diſcoveries and Gracious promiſes of the Goſpel: But this is nothing to the Queſtion, for we now conſider man under his moral Capacity; and of moral Actions 'tis that *Calvin* tells us, That it is of the ſpecial Grace of God as often as we think of doing any thing which may concern our Temporal Good; or as often as our minds and thoughts have averſion to any thing that may hurt us: Upon theſe moral Actions then it is that *Calvin* does chiefly controvert; though the Arguments and Examples he makes uſe of, are taken in a manner all of them from the Old Teſtament: To all which I anſwer:

Firſt, in general, That thoſe Expreſſions which we meet with every where in Scripture, are not to be underſtood in ſtrict Propriety of Language; but *per Modum Recipientis*, and in the ſame Senſe as God is ſaid every where to repent, to be jealous, to be angry, to forget, to hear and ſee, with ſuch like Paſſions and Affections as are infinitely ſhort of the Divine Nature; it ſeeming good to the Holy Spirit to uſe ſuch Deſcriptions to make weak and ignorant men more capable to underſtand the Will of God by ſuch ſenſible and familiar Repreſentations:

ons: And that this is the true Senſe of them is evident, from thoſe infinite Places in the Old Teſtament, where Men are invited to Repentance and Amendment of Life, to turn to the Lord, and where heavy Judgments are every where denounc'd againſt thoſe who ſhall not conform themſelves to ſuch Admonitions; all which would be nothing but a mere deluſion of men, if they were not able to turn themſelves one way or other. 'Tis certain alſo, that the Prophets every where uſe many Rhetorical and Figurative Expreſſions, Emblems and Similitudes, as doth *David* alſo, *Job*, and almoſt all the Ancient Writers: Now to underſtand all theſe literally, would be to lead us into endleſs Perplexities; we have therefore no other Rule to underſtand them by, but by interpreting them in ſuch a Senſe, as ſhall agree beſt with the Nature and Attributes of God, with the general Context and Scope of Scripture, and with the Nature alſo of Men endu'd with Reaſonable Souls.

Now ſo it is, that the Actions of Men are aſcrib'd alſo to God, not only from that general Influence he has upon his Creatures as their Creator, and by which he gives them Beings, and affords them his general Concurrence in all their Actions,

ons, whether Good or Evil (it being impoſſible a Creature ſhould ſubſiſt a moment independant upon God) but more eſpecially ſuch Actions are aſcrib'd to him, by reaſon of his foreknowledge of all future Events from all Eternity: And for as much as by his Previdence or Providence, he ſo orders theſe wicked Actions, as to make them beneficial to Men, and declaratory of his own Glory; either by uſing them as Puniſhments, or to humble them under the ſenſe of their Failings, or to divorce them from their Paſſionate Deſires after worldly Comforts; all which ſhews great Power as well as Goodneſs, proper only to Almighty God, to produce ſuch excellent Effects out of Evil, and to make an Antidote out of the Poiſon of the Serpent.

This may more ſpecially be demonſtrated from all the Inſtances which *Calvin* does enlarge upon, in making God to work inwardly in the Minds of Men, and as it were to inſpire them with wicked Purpoſes. Firſt then, for *Shimei*'s curſing *David*, it was a Tranſgreſſion againſt the Fifth Commandment of the Moral Law. *David*, who dated his Miſeries from the time of his Sin againſt *Uriah*, reflecting upon God's Juſt Judgments on him

him in a continual ſeries of Afflictions, commencing from that fatal Tranſgreſſion, piouſly aſcribes this particular Injury of *Shimei* to God's Juſt Judgment; for had he been aſcertain'd that God had directed or inſpir'd *Shemei* to it, it had been very unjuſt in *David*, upon his Death-bed, to mind *Solomon* of taking Revenge on *Shimei*, for what was done many years before by God's ſpecial Command. Next for *Abſalom*'s lying with his Father's Concubines; this was occaſion'd by *David*'s Tranſgreſſion of the Seventh Commandment, for which God tells him (2 *Sam.* 12.) that he would raiſe up Evil againſt him out of his own Houſe, and that his Neighbour ſhould lie with his Wives in the ſight of the Sun; which was verified in *Abſalom*, who tranſgreſſing the Fifth Commandment, as alſo the Seventh, executed what God had foretold, by ſpreading upon the Terraſs of the Royal Palace, and there lying with his Father's Concubines in the ſight of all *Jeruſalem*. This execrable Fact is ſaid to be done by God's Appointment, for as much as he made uſe of it for the Puniſhment of *David* by a way of Retaliation; when yet the Author or Counſellor of this wicked advice was the Devil, or *Ahitophel*, who by

by this means thought to make the Breach betwixt the Father and the Son to be incurable.

Another Inſtance is that of *Job*'s Calamities, but this was not *Malum Culpæ*, but *Malum Pœnæ*, deſign'd by God for the tryal of *Job*'s Patience, and for the Procurement of greater Bleſſings; and executed by the Devil with deſign to drive *Job* to Deſperation; in which Paſſage we find, that God's Part was only permiſſive, in withdrawing that Vertue, by which the Devil was kept in Awe and Subjection. Another Example is that of the Prophet, who ſeduc'd *Ahab* to go up and fall at *Ramoth-Gilead* (1 *Kings* 22.) This was ſaid alſo to be from the Lord, foraſmuch as he ſuffer'd a Spirit or the Devil, to inſpire the Prophets with a Lye. This fatal End was juſtly due to *Ahab*, who himſelf all his Life time had been willingly ſeduc'd by falſe Prophets, and was guilty alſo of ſhedding the Blood of Innocent *Naboth*. Nor does it appear, that what was reported by *Micaiah* in this Matter, was any more than Viſionary, repreſenting God's Permiſſion, that *Ahab* ſhould periſh by Seducers, who whilſt he liv'd was the great Patron or Protector of them: For to underſtand it literally, that God did hold

ſuch

ſuch a Conſult, and ask Advice of Evil Spirits how to deſtroy *Ahab*, is what we cannot apprehend, but under ſuch Imperfections and Characters of Deformity, as are utterly inconſiſtent with the Nature of God.

In like manner ought we to interpret that Place in *Ezekiel*, of God's ſaying, that when a Prophet is deceiv'd, 'tis he that deceiveth him; as likewiſe that other Paſſage of 2 *Theſſal.* 2. all which cannot be underſtood otherwiſe than of God's withdrawing his Grace, and ſo leave Men to the Courſe of their own Impetuous Luſts and Paſſions, and to the Inſtigation of the Devil. And here I cannot but call to remembrance how Blaſphemouſly ſuch Expreſſions were abus'd in the Time of the late Uſurper: For ſome of his Chaplains, as they call'd themſelves, pretending to have a Revelation from Heaven of his Recovery, when the Cheat was confuted by his ſubſequent Death, one of them in a Strain of Humiliation, charg'd God in the Language of *Ezekiel*, crying out, *Lord thou haſt deceiv'd us, nay even thou haſt ly'd unto us.* To ſuch dreadful Blaſphemies are Men miſled by ſuch groſs and perverſe Interpretation of Scripture.

The

The laſt Argument of *Calvin*'s which I ſhall mention, is that of the Prophet *Iſaiah* cap. 6. Where God bids the Prophet, *Make the Heart of the people fat, deafen their Ears, and blind their Eyes, leſt they ſhould ſee with their Eyes, hear with their Ears, and underſtand with their Hearts, and be converted and live.* This Paſſage *Calvin* much triumphs in, making frequent uſe of it to prove, That Spiritual Infatuation is the work of God. Now if this be underſtood literally, it proves that God does uſe his utmoſt endeavour to ſeduce and deſtroy thoſe, who otherwiſe would turn to him by Repentance; a thing which cannot be thought of but with great Impiety. Beſides, it proves the contrary to that for which *Calvin* does alledge it; for *Calvin* labours to prove from hence, that Man has not a power to decline a ſinful Act, when yet the Words import the very contrary: For were it not for ſuch a Spiritual Infatuation and Blindneſs, Men happily might ſee and underſtand too, and be converted; ſo that they are blinded on purpoſe to prevent their Converſion by ſeeing: And if they were blind before, what needs a direction to make them blind: This would be the ſame thing, as if we ſhould take one who was born without

Eyes, and ſhut him up in a dark cloſe Dungeon, for fear he ſhould ſee and make an eſcape; or as if we ſhould load a Cripple with Irons, for fear he ſhould make uſe of his Legs and run away; ſo that the very manner we ſee of the Prophets expreſſing himſelf, does imply a power in the Sinner of making uſe of his Eyes and Underſtanding in order to his own Converſion. All that can be concluded then from this place is this, That God may in Juſtice deprive Men of, or withdraw thoſe Natural Gifts from wicked Men, who have for a long time withſtood the good Motions of God's Holy Spirit inviting them to Repentance, which the Prophet does expreſs Symbolically, by deafning and blinding.

That we may not expatiate in *infinitum* upon this Topick, we will take in one Inſtance more out of the New Teſtament, which *Calvin* ſo much relies upon, and which carries indeed the greateſt ſhew of difficulty, being that of *Acts* the 2. where St. *Peter* ſays, that Chriſt was deliver'd up by the determinate Counſel and fore-knowledge of God; for as much as God by his infinite Providence and Goodneſs, made it a Means of conveying the greateſt happineſs to Mankind, in the Redemption of it, by the

the Paſſion of his only Son; when yet we find, that the True Moral Cauſe, or Incentive to this wickedneſs of the Jews, was the Devil, who entring into *Judas*, made uſe of his Covetous Diſpoſition, and for the lucre of a little Money tempted him to betray his Maſter.

We ſee then, that God, though he does not excite and impel the Wills of Men to ſinful Actions, yet is he not an idle Spectator of them, as *Calvin* dreams would follow from hence: For we ſee God acts a Part, and a great Part in them, not only in his Concurrence to them, as a Creator, but in making uſe of them; as alſo of the Evil Inclinations of men for good Ends, extracting Medicines out of Poiſon, which indeed is the greateſt Evidence of his Wiſdom and Goodneſs. And that a Rational Creature ſhould have ſuch a Power from his Creator over its own Actions, as to follow the Inclinations and Tendency of its own Faculties, is yet a further Proof of the Power and Wiſdom of his Creator; as 'tis a greater Proof doubtleſs of the Will and Abilities of a Work-man, to be able to make a Watch which ſhall move orderly by Virtue of thoſe Retorts and Springs he gave it, when he firſt made it, than if the Hand of the Artificer were always

upon the Needle, to direct and govern it in its motions. It is the Will of God, that Sinners ſhould repent and be ſav'd; and for this End he ſent his Son to take our Nature upon him: What Evil therefore we fall into is from our ſelves, and reflects not at all on God. The Sun (that Glorious Creature, and the great Inſtrument by which God governs the Vegetative World, and in a manner the Senſitive) does contribute to the Life and Growth of all Plants indifferently; and that ſome are poiſonous and hurtful, proceeds not from the Sun, but from the Nature of the Herb; and if the Sun by its atractive Beams, does raiſe Peſtilential Smells and Vapours which infect the Air, and cauſe Diſeaſes, this does not argue the leaſt malignity in that bright Planet, nor is the miſchief to be aſcrib'd to it, but to the Lakes, Ditches, and Dung-hills from whence they riſe.

And thus have I endeavour'd to give ſuch an Explication of God's Concurrence with men, as is freeſt from Ambiguity, and which is ſuitable to the Power, ſuitable to the Wiſdom, ſuitable to the Goodneſs, and ſuitable to the Juſtice of God; whereas the contrary Explication is not only repugnant to all theſe, but

but fills the Mind with infinite Perplexities, and leads its Adherors into fatal Errors.

CHAP. IX.

Of God's Influence on Publick and National Alterations.

HAving ſpoken to the *Calviniſtical* Doctrine, touching God's Concurrence with Men in ſinful Actions, the next thing to be Diſcours'd of, in order to a Vindication of Divine Providence from falſe Imputations, is that great and popular Point, Of his Influence on Publick and National Alterations: This being no other than a Superſtructure upon the former Doctrine. Now the Queſtion is not about ſubmiſſion to a Government which *de facto* is over us, but to inquire, whether all ſuch Alterations, though brought about or begun by Treaſons, Rebellions, Uſurpations, Hypocriſie, Perjury, ſlanderous Aſperſions and Defamations, Pious Frauds, and perhaps Conqueſt, be of God's appointment, or of a Divine Ordinance.

The Arguments which are brought to prove them ſuch, are taken partly from Example, partly from Precepts of Scripture, though ill expounded and worſe apply'd; of which the firſt is that of *Jeroboam*'s Revolt or Rebellion againſt *Rehoboam*, which is ſaid to be of the Lord, who alſo ſent a Prophet with expreſs Commiſſion to Annoint him. To this I have already ſpoken, at preſent 'tis enough to ſay, That the Evil of Puniſhment was denounc'd and executed by God againſt the Houſe of *Solomon* for their Idolatry, upon his permiſſion of *Jeroboam*'s Sin of Rebellion; the Houſe alſo of *Jeroboam* being puniſh'd in like manner, by the Rebellion of *Baaſha*, for the like Idolatry; as *Baaſha* was puniſh'd for his Idolatry alſo, by other Rebellions, and ſo on to the Reign of *Ahab*, who was chaſtis'd by *Jehu*; who himſelf, though ſaid to be appointed by God hereunto was no better than the reſt, till at length the Ten Tribes, with their Kings and Government, were utterly ſubverted in a final Captivity. Whatſoever then may be inferr'd from hence, this is certain, that the Children of *Iſrael* in adhering to *Rehoboam*, are branded deeply with Rebellion by the Spirit of God; and 'tis probable too, that

that they had never fallen into that groſs Idolatry or Rebellion againſt God, had they not at firſt fallen from their Civil Duty and Allegiance to their King; for we find that the Golden Calves were ſet up by *Jeroboam* to this End, leſt the People going up to *Jeruſalem*, the Place of the true Worſhip, might have an opportunity to ſee their Sin, by ſerving the True God, which probably muſt have begot deſires in them to ſhake off that Yoke which Uſurpation had laid upon them.

The whole Order and Method of God's Providential Influence in ſuch like Caſes, may be read more viſibly in that Rebellion, or ſhort Revolution under King *David*, who for that hardly to be expiated Sin againſt *Uriah*, mov'd God to bring his Judgments upon him, and amongſt the reſt this was one, *viz.* To raiſe him Evil from his own Houſe and Loins: For this is aſcrib'd to God, 2 *Sam.* 12. and ſo deeply was King *David* affected with the ſenſe hereof, that when he heard of *Abſalom*'s Conſpiracy, like a man deſtitute of help, and abandon'd by God (though he were known at other times to have been a Soldier of an undaunted Valour) he quitted the Royal City in a moſt dejected manner, attended with a ſmall Troop, marching in a

Penitential Order or Proceſſion, and not like an offended Soveraign; ſo that his abject Behaviour drew Tears from all the Spectators, excepting *Shimei*, who doubtleſs was the Head of a raſcally Mob, to inſult upon injur'd Majeſty, pelting him with Stones and Curſes: Nay, this Man after God's own Heart, was brought to ſo low an Ebb, that his Prophetick Spirit deſerted him, and left him expos'd to Terrours. And yet we find, that all theſe Calamities were compaſs'd by Human Means, and ſuch as we meet with uſually in Courts. His Son *Abſalom* we find was well enough qualified to manage a Revolt; for of the two Rebellious Sons with which good King *David* was curs'd (for ſo it was, that he had two of them, *Abſalom* and *Adonijah*) *Abſalom* was much the more dangerous, not only as being ſupported by that Oracle of a States-man *Achitophel*, but being himſelf alſo of a moſt plauſible and inſinuating Behaviour, and aggravating always the miſcarriages of the Court Miniſters, in that there was no Perſon of Integrity about the King to receive the Grievances of the People, and to Adminiſter Juſtice; promiſing withal, that if he ever came to the Crown, he would redreſs ſuch Abuſes; holding alſo a more intimate

intimate Correſpondence with ſuch as were diſgrac'd and diſguſted with the Court; all which he receiv'd with great familiarity, embracing them in his Arms, and kiſſing them. By theſe Arts of Popularity and Condeſcenſion, he is ſaid to have ſtoln, or rather raviſh'd the Hearts of *David*'s People. Such then were the Methods of former Times, as well as of later Ages, and ſuch they will be to the end of the World. And as theſe were human Policies, ſo were they blown up too by the like human Artifice: For *Huſhai* the *Archite*, a ſure Friend of *David*'s, claps on a Mask for a time, and gets within King *Abſalom*, by crying, *God ſave the King, God ſave the King*! And when *Abſalom* in a ſurly manner rallied him for abandoning his Soveraign Lord and Maſter, *Huſhai* with a *Gentelleſſe non pareille*, with an unparallell'd ſoftneſs, and with the utmoſt Artifice of a double refin'd Courtier, cajol'd *Abſalom*, in making God's Providence and the Conſent of the People, to be the ground and meaſure of his Allegiance, ſaying, *Nay, but whom the Lord and this People, and all the men of Iſrael chooſe, his will I be, and with him will I abide*, 2 Sam. 16. And then ſubjoins; *whom ſhould I ſerve, ſhould I not ſerve in the preſence*

preſence of his Son? as I have ſerv'd in thy Father's preſence, ſo will I ſerve in thy preſence: For which ſeaſonable and well manag'd Piece of Flattery or Court Loyalty, he was admitted into the Number of *Abſalom*'s Privy Councellors, and by that means did diſcover and defeat *Achitophel*'s Advice, which drew on the Reſtauration of his old Lord and Maſter.

Nay, though God in theſe or any other Paſſages of the Old Teſtament, had declar'd his Will in the moſt ample manner imaginable concerning ſuch Revolutions, and that they were brought to paſs by him of his deliberate Appointment and Inſtitution, in the ſame manner as any other Poſitive Law whatſoever, yet is not this any good Argument to prove ſuch Alterations in other Nations to be *de jure divino*. For the Jewiſh Government was a Theocracy or Government where God did viſibly preſide, raiſing up Judges, Deliverers, and Prophets by his ſpecial Inſpiration from time to time, even from the Children of *Iſrael's* leaving *Egypt* to the days of *Samuel*: Then indeed it was, that the People deſiring to be like the reſt of the Nations round about them, Petition'd for a King; which ſhews, though it were

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not according to God's Counſel and Good-liking, as God himſelf teſtified ſaying, that in asking for a King they did reject him from being their King; yet ſo it was, that God hearkned to them, where by the way we may obſerve how God acted in this Alteration of the Jewiſh Government, conformably to the Wills and previous Inclinations of the People, naming the Perſon to them whom he caus'd to be Anointed; ſo that 'twas not here, as 'twas in other Kingdoms, which were Elective or Hereditary; for God Tranſlated the Kingdom from the Houſe of *Saul* to the Houſe of *David*; nor did *Adonijah*, *David*'s Elder Son ſucceed, but *Solomon*; the like Interruption of Deſcent we may obſerve in others alſo. And yet for all this, no Man doubts, but that in Kingdoms now adays the Hereditary Deſcent of the Crown in a right Line is very Conſonant to the Law of God; and he that ſhould produce the Examples of the Jewiſh Succeſſions to the contrary, would be lookt upon as a Mad-man. The Ordinary Method by which God now adays does govern theſe Affairs, is by the Civil Laws and Sanctions of a Kingdom, and the Suffrages of the People, not excluding the Law of Nature, which

which gives Precedence to Primogeniture. These Ordinances we are sure do proceed from the God of Order; whatsoever falls out otherwise must be lookt upon as extraordinary, and out of the common Road.

But some will say; *That the most high ruleth in the Kingdom of men, and he giveth it to whomsoever he will*, Dan. 4. 17. And truly, by as good Authority may a Thief take away my Cattel. Put the Case then, that a Thief were Arraign'd for stealing, and Pleading not Guilty, the Court should ask him, how he would be try'd? By the Word of God, says the Thief, (as *H. Peters* answer'd in something a worse Case:) How, says the Judge, have you the Word of God on your side? yes, says the Thief, for I have the Cattel *jure divino*: Prove that, quoth the Judge: Why thus quoth the Thief, *The Lord taketh away, and the Lord giveth*, therefore 'tis the Lord who gave me the Cattel, nor did he give any thing but what was his own; for it is written of him, *Psalm* 50. *Mine are the Cattel upon a thousand hills.* Would such a Plea of my knavish Sophister pass Muster think you? No verily; for the Jury, doubtless, (if it were not a very Ignoramus one) would find him Guilty, and the Judge

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too would with a *Jure Divino* recommend them to the Gallows. The Caſe is perfectly the ſame in both theſe places of Scripture; and the Thief is to the great Robber, as the Pyrat was to *Alexander*. And if ſuch places as theſe may give Kings a Divine Right to their Crowns, I cannot ſee, but that Subjects too, when they rebel againſt them, and make them Priſoners, have God alſo on their ſide; for it is written of him, *That he bindeth their Kings in Chains*, &c. and we know who they were who blaſphemouſly applied it to the beſt of Kings this Nation ever enjoy'd: And when all is done, 'tis but to cant it out to the old Tune, *This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our Eyes.*

The Arguments taken from the New Teſtament have ſomething more of difficulty in them, being Preceptory, as that of the thirteenth to the *Romans*, where every Soul is required to be *ſubject to the higher Powers*; *for there is no Power but of God: the Powers that be are ordained of God. Whoſoever therefore reſiſteth the Power reſiſteth the Ordinance of God: and they that reſiſt ſhall receive to themſelves damnation*; and a little after, *verſe* 5. we are required to be *ſubject, not only for Wrath, but alſo for Conſcience ſake:*

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The like we meet, 1 Epiſt. of *Peter*, *c.* 2. of ſubmitting *ourſelves to every Ordinance of Man for the Lord's ſake*. To theſe I anſwer,

That the Powers or Ordinances which St. *Paul* ſpeaks of were ſettled Governments, and ſuch as had all the Qualifications and Conditions requiſite to Conſtitute a Legiſlative Power: For St. *Paul* wrote his Epiſtle *Anno Chriſti* 59, and the 2*d* of *Nero*'s: So that there was now more than an Hundred Years paſt ſince the firſt Uſurpation of *Julius Cæſar*. There was the Succeſſion of Six Emperors of the *Julian* and *Claudian* Family in a Legal Deſcent: and although *Julius Cæſar*, was a great Uſurper in ſuppreſſing the Senate, in whom the Government had ſo long continued; yet the Senate themſelves having confirm'd this Alteration for ſo many Ages, and through ſo many Succeſſions, by infinite Decrees and Acts teſtifying their Submiſſion; here was a real Abdication, or Reſignation on their part: And although they were at firſt brought to this by Conqueſt, yet ſo many ſubſequent and voluntary Acts, by which, as it were, ſtep by ſtep, they diveſted themſelves of their Authority, ſettled an indubitable right of Government in the Heirs and Succeſſors of *Cæſar*. Had *Cato*, *Caſſius*, and the *Bruti*,

Bacon. ad An. Chriſti 59.

ti, with others of the Republican Party, prevailed after that bold blow they gave in the Senate, they would have had not only Statues, but alſo Altars and Temples erected to them. But *Octavian* and his Party, getting the better by many illegal Methods, no leſs violent and ſanguinous than thoſe of his Predeceſſors; the Form of the Government, I ſay, was chang'd, and ſubmitted to by the Senate themſelves, and thoſe brave Men who endeavour'd to preſerve and retrieve their Countries Liberty, were ſtigmatiz'd with the black Character of Conſpirators, and Parricides: So much does Succeſs give Credit and Authority to Tyrannical Attempts. Now where there is an Authority or Government of ſuch continuance, and ſo univerſally ſubmitted to by the former Lords and Maſters, as the *Roman* Empire was at the time St. *Paul* wrote this Epiſtle, then will it be pertinent to cite this Paſſage: but when nothing of this appears, an Argument taken from a State ſo ſettled and ſubmitted to, as the *Roman* Empire was, is little to the purpoſe. The ſame Anſwer ſerves to that place of St. *Peter*, 1. *Ep. cap.* 2. As alſo that of our Saviours paying Tribute, or giving to *Cæſar* the things that were *Cæſar's*; for this was ſpoken about

about the Sixteenth Year of *Tiberius*, and Seventy Years after the death of *Julius*; ſo that in all theſe Caſes there was no viſible Right or Title which ſtood in competition with the Poſſeſſion of the Empire.

Hitherto I have ſpoken to the Teſtimonies of Scripture; in the Explication whereof the Rule is moſt ſafe and Orthodox, *viz.* to interpret Scripture by Scripture, and to underſtand it in ſuch a Senſe as ſhall not contradict a greater Evidence and Teſtimony of Scripture; and not to do as ſome, who when they are preſs'd with the pernicious Conſequences of their Interpretation, preſently ſhelter themſelves under God's unſearchable Wiſdom, crying out, *Who art thou, O man, who preſcribeſt Rules to thy Maker*! with ſuch Nonſenſical Stuff; as though God's Omnipotence could not be declared, but by obtruding on him horrid Impieties, and the moſt groſs Abſurdities. By the ſame Capacity, or Abſurdity rather, by which they endeavour'd from Scripture Teſtimonies to prove National Revolutions, procur'd by wicked Means, to be the peculiar and proper Work of God's Providence; or that ſuch Tyrannical Powers, once introduc'd, have God's Authority to warrant, and defend

defend them upon the Score of his Providential Prerogative: I ſay, by the ſame Logick we may prove from Scripture alſo, that God has no Providential Care over the World at all: Foraſmuch as we read, 2 *Cor. chap.* 4. *That the God of this World*, viz. *Satan*, *hath blinded the Minds of Men*; ſo that the Dominion of Satan in his Government of this World is abſolute, and that of a God. Now if the Devil rules in this World as Prince, or God, what Province to aſſign to God Almighty's Inſpection, is hard to imagine.

'Tis apparent therefore from hence, That all ſuch Scriptures are not to be underſtood literally, but analogically, and with reference to God's Attributes, and to the Articles of our Chriſtian Faith: Where, by the way, we may alſo obſerve *Calvin*'s perverſe Interpretation of that place of 2 *Theſ. chap.* 2. where God is ſaid to ſend them a *ſtrong deluſion, that they ſhould believe a Lye, that they all might be damn'd who believ'd not the Truth*; when yet from this place of the ſecond to the *Corinthians*, *chap.* 4. the blinding of the Minds of thoſe who believe not, is aſcribed to the Devil; to the Devil by the way of Counſel and Execution; to God by way of Permiſſion: For we cannot

aſcribe this Spiritual Execution to God and Satan too in one and the ſame Senſe without manifeſt Impiety.

But to return to the Temporal and greater Tranſactions of the World, what can be more abſurd, than that all violent acquiſitions, all the Uſurpations and Oppreſſions, all the Blood, Sacrilege, Rapine, and wicked Practices, by which many Kingdoms and Empires through all Ages have been raiſed up, propagated and enlarg'd; I ſay, that all ſuch Kingdoms thus ſupported ſhould be God's Ordinances; and that they who do not acknowledge this, are in a State of Damnation? Hence it will follow, that all the Chriſtians who have groaned under the Turkiſh Slavery, ſhould they by adhering to Chriſtian Princes, endeavour to recover their former Fortunes and Liberties, which they were Tyrannically deprived of; in doing this they would reſiſt the Ordinances of God, and incur Damnation? Nay 'twill follow alſo that the power of Supremacy, which the Pope is ſaid to uſurp, is alſo of God, or God's Ordinance: And truly, if Duration can give a Title, this of the Pope's has been of longer continuance than any other Title now in *Europe*, or perhaps in the whole World. It has been chal-

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leng'd for above a Thouſand Years, and actually ſubmitted to by a great many Nations. But it may be ſaid perhaps, that the Popes Uſurpations are Spiritual, and that in Spiritual Matters we are to obey God rather than Man. This Objection does not diſſolve, but rather knit the Knot faſter: For the Text ſaith, *There is no Power but of God; the Powers that be are ordained of God*; ſo that all Power, without exception falls under a Notion of God's Ordinance: And truly if God take ſuch a care for Temporal Adminiſtration, much more for Spiritual; if a Sparrow falls not to the Ground without his Will, he muſt needs be more concern'd for ſo great a Body of Men; the Church being that which he himſelf with his own Right Hand hath planted, in ſending his only Son to purchaſe it by his Incarnation, and ſuffering death upon the Croſs. The Spiritual Capacity is his Kingdom more peculiarly; and tho' the Papal Power were an Uſurpation, that's no matter, it being once poſſeſs'd by the Biſhop of *Rome*, and that for ſo long a time, it becomes a ſettled Government, and an Ordinance of God: They therefore who in the firſt Reformation did reſiſt this Power, did, according to theſe Mens Doctrine, reſiſt the Ordinance of God, and

are liable for ſo doing to Damnation. And thus have they found out a new Argument to juſtifie the Pope's Authority, ſuch as never any Jeſuit, nor the Pope himſelf yet dream'd of.

Nay, the Dominion and Power of Antichriſt, according to their Doctrine, muſt be an Ordinance of God's alſo: For whether the Pope be Antichriſt, or whether he be yet to come, certain it is, his Power is, or will be great: Nor could he have this Power, unleſs it were given him by God; they therefore who ſhall reſiſt Antichriſt, (according to this new Doctrine) reſiſt the Ordinance of God; and we know what follows, they ſhall receive Damnation; from which Sentence, as well as Doctrine, *Good Lord deliver us.*

When I firſt reflected upon the Doctrine of *Calvin*, touching God's Providential Influence, and the Conſequences of ſuch Doctrine, I was much amazed, that a Perſon of his Fame and Learning ſhould run upon ſuch a Precipice. But when I reflected upon *Geneva* alſo, and the Alterations he occaſion'd there by his Doctrine, my wonder ceas'd: *Geneva* being the Meridian for which the Ominous Prediction was calculated: hence it is, that whereſoever *Calvin*'s Doctrine doth prevail,

vail, it makes deep Impreſſions, by caſting down, and caſting up Principalities and Powers. But whether it be that this Doctrine does diſpoſe Men to Rebellion, or that they who are diſpos'd to Rebellion, do embrace this Doctrine for a Convenience, is much the ſame thing; ſince in all places almoſt, where one has been introduc'd, or rather intruded, the other has ſat Regent. And truly, let Ambitious Perſons make what uſe they pleaſe of ſuch Doctrines, they will never reap the ſame Fruit from it in the Conſervation as they did in the Acquiſition of their Power; for 'tis but for a hot and freſh Purſuer, High-lander like, to leap up behind him, and unhorſe the Rider, 'tis no matter how, and all is well; that one is tumbled out by another who jumps clearly into the Saddle; this feat of Activity is *Opus Dei*, *the Lord's doing*, and ſo let it be *in Nomine Domini*: though it be dreadful to conſider what fatal Calamities ſuch reiterated Uſurpations and Viciſſitudes muſt introduce.

Rebellion is as the Sin of Witchcraft, not only for the near Affinity and Contract which is betwixt it and the Devil, that Arch-Rebel, and for the myſtical Spells and Sacred Names it makes uſe of; but by reaſon alſo of its ſpecious Appearan-

ces; by which, as a Sorceress, it chains and fascinates all those who look towards it. It fills their Mouths with nothing but Liberty, Property, Reformation, Removal of corrupt Ministers and Magistrates, misapplying publick Money, and decay of Commerce; whilst it fills their Hearts with the rich Spoils of the Publick, with hopes of new Titles and Honours; with private Revenge, with Plunder, with Indemnity, with Offices, and mountainous promises of Success, or of being advanc'd perhaps to the highest Pinacle of the Government. These are the Philters by which Men are at first brought in, and at last caught: and when they come to die, like those who have been long enchanted with the Delusions of the Devil, they'll find that all those splendid Entertainments, all the Princely Company and Ornaments, all their Banquets, Jollity, and Flattering Delights, which did appear to them amidst their Consults and Meetings of the Night, to vanish in an instant; and all the glorious Scenes of Darkness will prove in the end fantastical, and meer Apparitions, when they themselves, left naked and forlorn, shall be call'd upon, perhaps, to pay their last Debt, not only to Nature, but to the Law too.

I think, and frankly declare it, That if we look into the State of the World, we may ſafely ſay, that moſt, or all the Monarchies and Republicks in *Europe*, and elſewhere, for ought we know, derive their Birth (as I have ſaid before) from Uſurpation and Conqueſt; what Havock was made by the *Goths*, *Vandals*, *Lombards*, *Hunns*, *Normans*, &c. is legible in Hiſtory, and more legible in the Ruins and Deſolations they made, we know what Kings are deſcended from them through all Ages: Nor can we of this Nation be ignorant, how the *Romans*, *Saxons*, *Danes*, and *Normans* ſucceeded one another by violent Extruſion: So that perhaps the poor *Britains*, or *Welſh*, are the pureſt *Aborigeniſts* this day in Chriſtendom. That therefore which made all theſe crude beginnings, to digeſt and ripen into Lawful Governments, was not an imaginary *Jus Divinum*; but time, and the following conſent of the People, who by mutual Comport, and by mature and equitable Laws, gave that due mixture of theſe firſt jarring Inſtruments or Principles, as made the Body, compounded of them, to be fix'd and ſolid. Good Laws then are thoſe eſſential and vital parts of Government, which carry the Image and Superſcription of Divine Authoriry.

Theſe are grounded upon Truth and right Reaſon, which without diſpute ſpring from God: The better therefore a Government is made up of theſe Principles, the better is its Conſtitution, and whatſoever Occaſions may introduce an Alteration, and whatſoever Diſaſters may attend it, it is Pious and Chriſtian-like to look up to Heaven, and to acknowledge the Gods Clemency in the Chaſtiſement. And although God may, and does ſometimes, in an extraordinary manner, and independent on ſecondary Cauſes, to diſpoſe of Circumſtances, and give an Iſſue to them beyond the Proſpect of any Human view; yet unleſs we knew what and when 'twas, 'tis Arrogance in us, to ſtamp them all promiſcuouſly with the Image and Authority of God: 'Tis enough for us to revere him, and humble our ſelves under all his Providential Methods.

As for thoſe who endeavour to prove Monarchy to be *ex Jure Naturæ* (and ſo by Antecedence *ex Jure divino*) from that Paternal Authority or Juriſdiction, which the Heads of Families or Tribes had over their own Members and Dependants in the firſt Ages of the World; this I ſay is no good Argument. I grant that the Heads or Fathers of every Tribe had

had a Deſpotick and Supream Power over all who liv'd within their own Territories: This then was the Order or Oeconomy of Mankind, for every Family to make a Neighbourhood within it ſelf, and not to diſpoſe themſelves into remoter Places, as now a-days. They endeavour'd alſo to encreaſe their Families by the Number of Servants, who were alſo Incorporated into them. So that theſe Aſcititious or Adopted Members, were lookt upon as Branches grafted into the Common Stock. This is evident from the Hiſtory of the Bible, where we read of Kings of every Town or Village almoſt, which were no more but Toparches or the Heads of ſo many Families, which in Ancient Times were called Nations alſo. The like we may obſerve at this very day in the High-Lands of *Scotland*, which Country being never yet Conquer'd, or hardly over-run, they ſtill retain that Primæval Oeconomy of uniting their Families into Bodies, which they call *Clans*, of which each has its Head, who has in a manner an abſolute Command over all the reſt of that Tribe or *Clan*, as is obvious to all: This then, I ſay, was the Order and Government of the Ancient World in the Ages after the Flood: But being

being it was not poſſible that it ſhould continue in this State; for the Multiplication of ſo many Toparches or Princes of Families Neighbouring one upon another, begat infinite Diſorders and Quarrels, which could not be terminated but by force of Arms: Something like this alſo we find at this day, to ariſe frequently amongſt the High-land *Clans*, where meeting with one another in great Bodies, they fight it out at Sharps, and live always in a kind of Hoſtile manner. To remedy ſuch Miſchiefs, the ſeveral Families or Tribes of old, were forc'd to unite themſelves into one Common and greater Body, under certain Laws of Government, whether Monarchical or of a Commonwealth; or in Caſe of Conqueſt, to make the beſt Terms they could with the Conqueror. And this is the True and Natural Original of all Governments throughout the World, and are no more the Work and Inſtitution of God, than other Civil or Natural Occurrences, derivable from him, as he is the Creator and Preſerver of the World, which generally he Governs by the ordinary and familiar Methods of Nature.

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

Of God's ſpecial Providence over the Actions of Private Perſons.

FRom God's Providential Government of Human Affairs, in reſpect of Civil Bodies, we advance in the next Place to conſider, the continuance of the ſame Paternal and Providential Power, in relation to the Lives and Actions of every Private Man: This follows Naturally from the former, for as much as the ſame Virtue which moves the Body, muſt move alſo every Part and Member of it; as alſo, for that God's Omnipotence, Omniſcience, and Omnipreſence (upon which Attributes is founded his Providential Power) extend themſelves to all the Actions of Individual Perſons, from the dependance they have on him, as their firſt Cauſe and Preſerver. But to proſecute this Point with more particular Arguments, we may firſt take notice of what occurs to our Obſervation in God's ſpecial Care of Man, at his firſt entrance into the World, above other Creatures. It is known to all, how ſome have been expos'd in their Infancy, and have been miraculouſly

miraculouſly preſerv'd to be the Parents of mighty Nations, ſuch as *Moſes*, *Cyrus*, *Romulus*; and the like is ſtoried alſo by the Poets, of their *Jupiter* and others of their Gods, thereby intimating the ſpecial care of Divine Providence towards particular Men, not only in ſaving them from the Dangers they were expos'd to, but by making them the chiefeſt Inſtruments in Matters of greateſt Moment and of Univerſal Benefit.

But to leave theſe unuſual Methods, which ſeem to carry in them ſome ſhew of Miracle, let us look a little nearer home, and we ſhall find that Man, of all Creatures that come into the World, is naturally the moſt unable to ſhift for himſelf; all Beaſts, almoſt as ſoon as born, find the way to the Teat; Birds once hatch'd are quickly in a Condition to feed themſelves, but with Mankind 'tis otherwiſe. The Infant that is born ſtands in need of continual Help and Succour, and is expos'd to continual Cold and Hunger, to Wants and Danger; and this too, not for ſome days, but for ſome years, before it can be able to feed and nouriſh it ſelf; and yet we ſee how God does provide for all theſe Exigencies of Nature, when all Natural means ſeem to fail. For the Children of thoſe poor Creatures, who ſeem

ſeem deſtitute of all Relief themſelves, rarely miſcarry through want of Succour, unleſs through the wilful Impiety and Cruelty of ſuch Parents, who to conceal their own ſhame, or to eaſe themſelves of ſome ſmall Expence and Care, embrue their Hands in the Blood of thoſe tender Infants, or actually with-hold that Suſtenance and Comfort which their Condition does require: In which Caſe God is not oblig'd to work Miracles, and force the Wills of theſe bloody and obdurate Wretches, to prevent the Effects of their wicked Intentions, no more than he is oblig'd to lay a Phyſical reſtraint on Men to keep them from the commiſſion of Murder, Theft, Inceſt, or any other ſuch Crimes, as depend upon their own proper Will and Power.

I ſhall here forbear to ſpeak of the Natural Gifts and Perfections of Man's Mind, (that being elſewhere treated of at large.) We have a ſignal Proof of God's particular Goodneſs and Care towards Man, in that Dominion and Soveraignty he has given him over all other Animals whatſoever. How do all the Beaſts of the Earth and Fowls of the Air, give way and retire at his appearance or approach; and by ſuch with-drawing, confeſs a Majeſty in his Preſence? The fierceſt

fierceſt Creatures, and thoſe of greateſt ſtrength, will not make oppoſition, unleſs they be mightily provok'd, and reduc'd to great Extremity. Others again expreſs a more than ordinary Obſequiousneſs mixt with Fear, and almoſt all pay him Homage and Service. In a word, Providence is that Vigilant and Indulgent Mother, which with an hundred Arms labours perpetually, and preſents to every Man all the Bleſſings and Delights of Nature. She enlivens him by the Light and Beauty of the Stars; ſhe warms him with her Flames; ſhe refreſhes him with her ſweet Showers and Breezes of Air; ſhe ſerves him with her wholeſom Waters; ſhe ſurrounds him with Rivers, which ſerve for Defence and Commerce, for Delight and Benefit: She delights him with Verdant Paſtures, with enamel'd Meadows, and with the Curious Colours, Figures, and ſweet Odours of Herbs and Flowers. She does Recreate him with the Melody of Birds, and with the ſoft murmurs of Chryſtal Rivolets and Fountains; ſhe does nouriſh and enrich him with her fruitful Fields; ſhe ſhelters him with her Trees yielding Shade, and Materials for Building; ſhe does feaſt him with infinite variety of Fruits beautiful to the Eyes, fragrant to the

the Smell, and delicious for Taste, as well as wholesom for Food; she furnishes his Table with all varieties of Meat, according to mens different Appetites, and the several Seasons of Nature; the Earth with all sorts of Flesh, the Air with Fowl, and the Rivers with Fish; and in Case of Sickness, he is succour'd with Medicinal Plants, Minerals, and Waters of rare Virtue; so that which way soever a man turns himself, he receives Tribute from every quarter of the World, and Feasts his Senses with the Wonders and Delights which do surround him. These indeed are but some of those Entertainments which are in a manner common to all Men, being such as flow from the Hands of Providence in the Blessings of Nature; To which if we add the Benefits and Ornaments of Art, with what comes from Traffick and Commerce, they would exceed Number. As for other Creatures, into what a narrow compass are their Enjoyments reduc'd? All their content is measur'd by a little Food and Water; and after the Flux of a few years or days perhaps, they wax feeble and die.

That which seems to discredit this important Truth, is the Observation which has been made through all

Ages,

Ages, that the greateſt Libertines and Oppreſſours are for the moſt part Proſperous, and ſwim in Pleaſures and Delights, whilſt the Vertuous and Innocent are generally deſpis'd, and many times reduc'd to Miſery; or if ſome become more fortunate, it is preſently attributed to the Deity they Invoke; when yet others, much more in Number, and no leſs conſtant in imploring the Mercies of Heaven, notwithſtanding all their Efforts, become a Prey to Impiety; being either Sacrific'd to the Exactions of Uſury, or trampled on by the Voluptuous and Proud, or perhaps Plunder'd at the Will and Pleaſure of a Tyrant; or exhauſted by the methods of a tedious proceſs of Sickneſs; or blaſted by Defamations and Slanders; or afflicted with an unfortunate Family; with many ſuch like Miſeries and Diſaſters. Upon which Account, when one told *Diagoras*, *Thou who doſt believe that the Gods neglect Mens ſafety, doſt thou not obſerve the contrary, from the many Pictures or Votive Tables hung upon their Temples, by thoſe who eſcap'd Shipwrack?* *Very true*, reply'd *Diagoras*, *for there are no Pictures of thoſe who periſh'd.*

In Anſwer to this Calumny, and all the Parts and Members of it: Firſt, Good

Good men may not be successful in what they pray for, because they do not use the Means. The Husband-man in the Fable, finding his Waggon stuck in the Dirt, lays down his Whip, and calls on *Hercules* for help; to whom the God made answer, Rise, Fool, and use thy Whip, and put thy Shoulders to the Wheels, and then call on *Hercules* and he will succour thee. God does not work Miracles to supply the Sloth of men. Secondly, though men may use their best Endeavours for attaining what they pray for, they may be unsuccessful nevertheless, by proposing undue Ends. This man asks for Riches, that he may pass the remainder of his Life in softness and delight; that man sues for Honour, and the Grace and Favour of his Prince, that he may shew a Grandure in Commanding others, and receiving Marks of Homage and Obedience. Thirdly, Tho' the thing we pray for may be Honest and the End Good, yet God may refuse to grant it, because it may not be Beneficial; or if of present Benefit, yet of future and durable Inconvenience; which made the Heathen cry out, *Nam pro jucundis aptissima quæque dabunt Dii:* The Gods, instead of what seems pleasant, may answer us another way, by

giving us what is fitting and uſeful. But if the Subject of mens Prayers be the Preventing of ſome Evil which threatens us, or perhaps the Removal of ſomething which afflicts us, yet may we be unſucceſsful without any Reproach to Providence, upon theſe two Conſiderations: Firſt, The Evil which we deprecate, may be deſign'd only for Correction and Amendment; this is no more ſtrange, than to ſee the Surgeon, whoſe help we implore to remove a Pain, inſtead of giving preſent eaſe, to fall a-cutting and burning, and perhaps diſmembring. Secondly, God may lay Calamities and Afflictions upon men, that they may produce Nobler Acts of Virtue. The Stock from which the Husband-man expects the choiceſt Fruit is prun'd moſt, and muſt often bleed, by ſuffering his Luxuriant Branches to be cut away; whereas Common Trees have been ſuffer'd to grow at random, and to ſpread wide their Arms, that they may afford more Fuel for the Fire. This the Heathens underſtood perfectly, in the Temple which they built to Honour, which was ſo plac'd, that there was no entrance to it but by that of Virtue, whoſe Nature conſiſts in Fortitude, and whoſe Object is Difficulty and Danger. *Æneas* is Figur'd

gur'd as a Pattern of Heroick Virtue, whilst he is expos'd to Burnings and Tempests, tos's'd from Shore to Shore, and always made to feel the strokes of an incens'd Deity; all which serv'd but to render him more firm and resolute in his Actions, being like the Armour he wore, which was made impenetrable, by being wrought in the Fire, by being forg'd and beaten upon the Anvil, and dipt in the *Stygian* Lake.

Further yet; Divine Providence may suffer Good men to be a long time under Disgraces and Afflictions, to render restor'd Comforts more dear and affecting. The longer men have lain in Chains and Captivity, the greater is the Jubile by which they are restor'd to Liberty: 'Tis like a Pardon upon the Point of Execution, where the Fears of Death yield stronger Fuel and Vigour to Life: How sweetly does a man who is deliver'd from the sharp Assaults of the Gout, taste the Pleasures of Health? how thankful is he for the Benefit, and what esteem has he for the Means by which he was restor'd?

In the last Place; Though Divine Providence should never withdraw the Misfortune under which we groan, yet is this no Argument that we are neglected by it: on the contrary, it is the

beſt Argument in the World to ſupport us under it, it being utterly inconſiſtent with the Nature and Goodneſs of God, to ſuffer Innocence to be oppreſs'd without a due Reward; which, becauſe it is not found in this Life, it remains, that there is a future State after Death, where Virtue ſhall be Crown'd: But this I ſhall wave at preſent, as being founded upon the Soul's Immortality; a Point, which by the method of this Argument, may be diſcours'd upon hereafter; for at preſent I ſhall decline all Topicks taken from the Truth and Doctrines of the Chriſtian Religion, till I ſhall arrive to it by the Courſe and Progreſs of Reaſon. Upon this Proſpect, which the wiſer Heathens had of a future State after death, they bravely endur'd the Inſults of Fortune, and triumph'd over the Cruelty of thoſe by whom they ſuffer'd. *Theramenes* being Condemn'd by the Thirty Tyrants of *Athens*, took the fatal Cup into his Hand and drank to *Critias*, who was the moſt active man amongſt them to pronounce the Sentence. Brave gallantry in him, to behold Death with an undaunted Countenance, and drink his Enemies Health in his own Poiſon! *Socrates* not long after, was, by the Command of his Judges, Condemn'd

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to the same Prison, and to drink of the same Poisonous Cup, which being about to take off, he discours'd after this manner: "I have great hopes, my Judges, it will be well with me that I am "condemn'd to die; for one of these two "Things are certain, either that Death "shall extinguish all Sense, or Translate "us into another Place; if all Sense be "extinguish'd, Death certainly is but "like a sound sleep, which is then most "pleasing and natural, when it is not interrupted by the Fantasms of a Dream. "Good God! How great Profit is it for "me to die! or who can be more Happy "than I? But if it be true (as men say) "that Death is nothing but a Migration into those Regions which men Inhabit after this Life, thou art yet more "happy, since thou shalt be deliver'd "from them who would now be accounted Judges, that thou maist go over to "those who are Judges indeed; such as "*Minos*, *Rhadamanthus*, *Æacus*, and "*Triptolemus*, and there Converse with "those who have liv'd Justly. What "would you not give to discourse with "*Orpheus*, *Musæus*, and *Homer*? Truly I "would die often if it were possible, "that I might Experiment the Truth of "these things; nor would such of you

"amongſt my Judges, who declar'd me "Innocent, fear to die: For no Evil can "happen to a good man whether living "or Dead; nor can his Concerns be "neglected by the Immortal Gods: Nor "does this happen to me by chance, no "more than I would have Cauſe to be "offended with thoſe by whom I am Ac-"cus'd and Condemn'd, were it not that "they thought they did me hurt. Thus "it fares with me, and better it cannot "be: But 'tis time for me to go hence; "I to my Death, you to your Life, but "of the two which is beſt, is known on-"ly to the Immortal Gods.

Having Vindicated Divine Providence from that Part of the Objection which concerns the Misfortunes of Good men, let us look a little towards the other Scale, in which the Properiety of Evil men is caſt, and ſee whether it be of that weight and moment, as to turn the Balance of Juſtice. I ſhall not inſiſt upon the momentary Eſtate of ſuch men, many of which vaniſh ſuddenly like thoſe gaudy Butter-flies, which are engender'd and flutter in the Sun-ſhine: No, let us bring the Matter under an Impartial Tryal, with whatſoever may advantage the Conditions of ſuch men, and we ſhall find the Equity of God's Diſpenſations in theſe following Conſiderations. Firſt;

Firſt; thoſe ſeeming Darlings of Fortune, notwithſtanding all their Luſtre and Parade, are commonly travers'd in their Courſe of Life with ſome Diſaſters, which embitter all their Pleaſures and Enjoyments: Here we find a Right Worſhipful Sinner, who Flatters his Superiours, Inſults upon his Inferiours, and Cajolls his Equals, with all ſeeming Kindneſs: He lives Jollily and Gay, treats often, and drinks at all, even from the Church of *England* to the beſt in Chriſtendom: In fine, he paſſes in the Eyes of moſt men for a Popular and Happy man; when all this while there lies an unlucky Mortgage perhaps, which feeds day and night upon his Eſtate, and which obliges him to pay ſecretly ſome Homage Fees to Keepers, Catchpoles and Under-Sheriffs; nor does he want ſometimes the Comfortable Proſpect of a Jayl. But admit his Fortunes lie without the reach of ſuch miſchievous Engines, yet 'tis poſſible he may find other Diſcomforts from his Family which may poiſon his Content. The Wife of his Boſom may wound him with Jealouſie; or if Chaſt, ſhe may be Profuſe, Imperious and Importunate; that if there be nothing of all this, yet 'tis more than probable, that ſome one

or other of his Children may give him matter of conſtant diſturbance; the Prop and Flower of his Family, even my young Maſter the Squire, and his hopeful Heir, may be an Impudent Debaucht Rogue, perhaps a Fool: For ſuch, as they are the common Inſtruments, ſo are they as commonly the choice Maſter-pieces and Workmanſhip of Knaves.

In the next Place, admit the Proſperity of Evil men to have no bad Concomitants of another kind, nevertheleſs 'tis certain, that even in their own Nature there is bred ſomething which is deſtructive to the welfare of the Subject it belongs to. The moſt Luxuriant Trees die ſooneſt of the Canker, which they themſelves nouriſh. The Rich Extortioner paſſes with moſt for a very notable man. He thrives daily in the World, which he ſeems to Command by the help of his Money; (for amongſt the Vulgar all mens Gentility, Merits, and Quality, are meaſur'd by the Acre) and yet who knows not by what Infamous Practices ſuch a Perſon works; What Anxiety is there which fills his Thoughts? How is he ever tormented with his own Fears, and ſometimes with the remembrance of his Guilt? He places his Felicity

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in a bare acquisition, whilst he himself commonly wants all those Comforts his Money might procure: His Sleep is disturb'd with Apparitions, and sometimes with real Alarms of those who visit his Coffers. There is another who places his Felicity in a full Enjoyment of whatsoever lies within the reach of Fancy: He stuffs his Carcass with most delicious Wines, and with whatsoever Rarety is to be found amongst the Living, or to speak more properly, amongst the Dead: He is always hunting out for Fuel for his Lechery, and so passes away his Time amidst Feasts, Courtships, and the Divertisements of the Night: Till at length he finds himself arrested by a rude Fit of the Gout, or of a Dropsie, or perhaps a worse Distemper: The next News we hear of him is, that he is beleagur'd with the whole Faculty of Doctors, Apothecaries, and Surgeons, with their Auxiliaries, who very regularly invest his Body, and formally attack it too, with all the Instruments and Artillery of Art; Scarifications, Caustick, Salivations, and Circumcisions are hard things for the poor Patient to understand, but much harder for him to undergo. And here I leave them to dispute the Point with Nature, being no more concern'd whether

ther *Venus* or *Mercury* get the better over him, than I ſhould be for the Proudeſt and moſt Puiſſant man alive, ſhould I ſee him ſtrut with a more Puiſſant *Cancer*, or ride in triumph with an Invincible *Fiſtula*.

Then for the Ambitious Perſon, how Happy ſoever he ſeems to be, he carries his Mortification with his State: He ſwells at the approach of thoſe who depend upon his Honour, whilſt he repays their humble Salutations with a new faſhion'd Grin, and anſwers their Petitions with a Shrug; or when diſpos'd to a Gracious Compliance, by an Emphatick Nod. With a man of this Kidney, the leaſt ſlight will be able to Create a Fever; and yet let ſuch a one be aſſur'd, that as he is never wanting to himſelf to give the Occaſion, ſo others will not fail to make good the Counter-point, and ſome time or other find an Oppertunity to follow the Repartee with the Piquancy of Scorn. Others there are of this Tribe, who proceed another way, and by the Prudent Methods of a long-ſtudied Diſſimulation and Hypocriſie, crouch like Capuchins at the Feet of thoſe who may any way advance their Ambitious Ends; but above all, they labour to win the Fame and Acclamations of the Vulgar, eſteeming

ing nothing like to that of being seen and talk'd of under the swelling Characters of Popular Greatness: These are lookt upon as rising and happy men; and so they are certainly, if Happiness does consist in the worst of Slaveries, *viz.* A forc'd Compliance to the Passions of others in flat Contradiction to ones own Will and Inclinations; if it be happiness to live in constant Jealousies and Fears, and to be oblig'd sometimes to act the Perfidious, and to expect always the same from others; if it be Happiness to carry a Calmness in the Face, and a Tempest in the Breast, and so be depriv'd of all the ways of ease for want of vent. And as for common Fame, what is it but a puff of Breath, which perhaps may swell an empty piece of Skin into the dimensions of a Bladder, and so be able to bear it up for a time, and make it swim upon the Surface of the Waters, maugre all the violence of the Winds and Floods, of the Storms and Waves? and yet for all this big appearance, give this rising thin floating Excrement but a prick, and aways flies all the Breath which bore it up, and vanishes in the Mass of common Air; and then there remains nothing of this windy Greatness, but a poor thin piece of Matter, which shrinks into

into a little compaſs, and is ſoon loſt and caſt away. One peircing Glance of an offended Majeſty may ſtab the Fortunes of the greateſt Favourite, where his Fall perhaps will not be without Ignominy, and without good Conduct may prove a fatal Precipice.

In the Third place, let us ſuppoſe yet further, that Wicked men ſhould enjoy all the Good things of this Life, without any mixture of Evil, either from the Nature and Concomitants of ſuch Enjoyments, or from any other Collateral Misfortune whatſoever, ſo that their Felicity may flow in upon them with a full Wind and Tide, and be as eaſie and unlimited as their Wiſhes; yet there is one thing moſt certain, that they muſt have an End; which End too will as certainly give them a Proſpect of Two things, *viz.* Paſt and Future; if they look backwards, they will doubtleſs feel remorſe of Conſcience; or if not, yet the Remembrance of their good Fortune, if it were ſatisfactory, will augment their preſent Miſery; if empty, their Folly: But then if they look forwards, they will find themſelves ſurrounded with inextricable Terrors: For though there were no ſuch thing as a Hell, yet the Apprehenſion of it, accompanied with the

the Images of Guilt, is almoſt as bad: But if there be ſuch a thing as Hell, where are they then? But to this we ſhall ſpeak hereafter, when we ſhall enquire into the Soul's Immortality: ſo that upon all Conſiderations of Reaſon whatſoever, there is no ground to believe any neglect on God's part in the Adminiſtration of Mens Concerns, from the Proſperity of wicked Men.

But in the laſt place, what will become of the mighty Objection, if it ſhall appear after all, that good men (tho not all) are more proſperous and happy in the outward Comforts and Delights of Life, than the Atheiſtical and Wicked. We find indeed glorious Examples of Great, Fortunate, and Vertuous Perſons in all Ages, Places, and Conditions of Life; even ſuch, who confining their Enjoyments, within the proper Circles of Moderation and Temperance, have really a better ſenſe of them than thoſe who puſh them on to Luxury and Surfeit. And as they taſte them better, ſo have they this advantage alſo to make them the Inſtruments of Good to others; which cannot but procure to themſelves great Honour, and Tranquility of Mind for the preſent; as alſo a ſolid and eternal Monument of Glory through all future

ture Ages. Riches, Honours, Employments of State are good and great Bleſſings; they firſt furniſh Men with what may reaſonably advance their own Happineſs; and then, like Gods, make them capable to derive a Happineſs to others. To theſe we owe the Erection and Endowments of Schools, Hoſpitals, Colleges, Churches, Religious Houſes, Publick Edifices, with other Monuments, which ſerve ſo much for the improvement of Piety, Good Manners, and Civil Commerce. It is to good Kings, together with their Counſels of Wiſe and Vertuous Stateſmen, to whom we owe the Sanction of wholſom Laws, our Defence from Danger, with whatſoever relates to the Welfare and Security of a Kingdom; ſo that even in this Life we may readily obſerve, that the Scale of Vertue does out-weigh.

Before we leave this Branch of my Diſcourſe, there is one Objection, or Scruple rather, touching the precedent Doctrine, and 'tis this: The Events we meet with in all our Human Concerns, are either Inevitable, or ſuch as cannot but be; or Evitable, or ſuch as ſometimes, had not God in an unuſual and ſpecial manner interpos'd, had never been. If Inevitable, then is it ſuperfluous and vain to de-

precate

precate the Evil which will fall upon us, tho we invoke Heaven never ſo much, as 'twould be ſuperfluous and fruitleſs to ſupplicate God for that which will befal us without our Application. But if ſuch Events are ſaid to be Evitable, then will it follow, that what Evil hath been, might not have been; which yet ſeems impoſſible: For whatſoever hath been at ſome time, was from all Eternity foreſeen by God that it ſhould be; and whatſoever God from all Eternity foreſaw ſhould be, could not but be: now, that what could not but be, might yet have not been, is a palpable Contradiction.

To this, which ſeems rather a Cavil or Sophiſm of the *Stoick*, than a ſolid Objection, I anſwer: That things may be ſaid to be inevitable or Immutable in Two reſpects; either by an Inevitability of Nature; or by an inevitability of the Event; for inſtance: That Fuel ſhould burn is Inevitable from the Nature of Fire, whoſe inſeparable Property it is to burn; ſo that here to hinder the effect, is the ſame thing as to work a Miracle; but that the Fire ſhould have burnt my Houſe and not another Mans, this was neceſſary or Inevitable only in the effect, or upon a ſuppoſition, that what

was

was burnt could not but be burnt, or what was done could not be undone: and about theſe latter Caſes 'tis, that Providence does for the moſt part exerciſe it ſelf: So that we ſee how the ſame thing may be both Evitable and Inevitable at the ſame time; Evitable in reſpect of the Cauſes or Occaſions leading to it; foraſmuch as there was no neceſſity of the application of ſuch a Cauſe; which Cauſe notwithſtanding being once applied, or occaſioning ſuch an Effect, this Effect becomes Inevitable, notwithſtanding the Contingency in the Cauſes or Occaſions leading to it. Now when we offer up our Petitions to God, either to be delivered from Evil, or to receive Good at his Hands, our Addreſſes are not ſuperfluous; foraſmuch as it may ſometimes, and does frequently happen, that God may avert an impendent Danger, or beſtow upon us an unexpected Good, by ſuch means as lie out of the ordinary courſe of Cauſes, and this too without a Miracle; whereas, had things run on in their natural Courſes, the Event would have been far otherwiſe. The reaſonableneſs of our addreſſing of ourſelves to God in all our Exigencies, and in what way and manner, and upon what Grounds we may hope to find Succeſs,

hath

hath been before declared. *Desine Fata Deûm flecti sperare precando*, was the Sally of a Poetick Fancy, shewing a Sentence already executed to be irrevocable: What Judgment we are to pass upon them before their Execution, or in relation to God's fore-knowledge, or influencing of them, will be more conveniently discours'd of in the following Chapter: 'Tis sufficient at present to observe, that as the end, so also the means fall both alike under God's Providential Inspection: so that when Men pray to God with a good intent and purpose, they may conclude safely, that God is no less the Author of their good Inclinations than of the Blessings they implore; and that if such good Desires be of his Bounty and Grace, they may reasonably expect his favourable Return to their Petitions, in some way or other, as shall be most suitable to the Wisdom of the Giver, and to the Necessities of the Receiver.

God in his Providential Concurrence with Men, deals with us as an Indulgent Mother does with her tender Infant; which being set upon its Feet attempts to go; but being ready to fall, the Mother leads him by the Hand, or holds

him by his Shoulder-ſtrings; by which means the weak Infant moves forwards, and the Mothers Hand follows or goes along with it, and ſuſtains it: But in caſe it draw near to the Fire, Water, or any place of danger, the Provident Mother ſuccours it with greater ſtrength, and turns it another way, and then leaves it to its own little Wandrings, ſtill bearing it up for fear of falling: nay, ſometimes ſhe ſlackens her Hand a little, and ſuffers the Child to trip, or perhaps to fall gently to the Ground on purpoſe, that by ſuch little Slips or Hurts, it may learn to take more diligent heed to its Steps, and by this means learn alſo to walk ſteadily and ſecurely. Now albeit the Child in theſe firſt Eſſays of Nature, could not be able by its own ſtrength to walk with ſafety; ſo neither is that Vertue or ſtrength with which the Parent aſſiſts its weak but innocent Child, ſufficient of it ſelf to perform the Motion; but both being join'd together, is that which ſets the Wheels of Nature going. And in ſuch wiſe like this it is, that God is pleaſed by his Paternal and Providential Care, to govern the Motions of Men, and to divert them ſometimes in caſe of impendent Danger, or of ſome extraordinary

ry Occaſion, by applying greater Power and Vertue than what is uſual in his ordinary Concurrence with them.

CHAP. XI.

Of Fate and Fortune.

BEfore we leave our Obſevations upon Providence, there are Two things requiſite to be ſpoken to under Two Names, which much amus'd the Ancients, and which at this day alſo have their ſpecial Patrons and Abettors, *viz.* Fate and Fortune. I ſhall begin with Fate, which is generally underſtood to be no other than an irrevocable Sentence, or Decree of Heaven, by which Human Affairs are from all Eternity ordain'd, in ſuch wiſe, that they cannot poſſibly be otherwiſe: The abſurdity of which Doctrine is evident from hence; foraſmuch as it doth furniſh Men with a falſe Defence for the Commiſſion of all manner of Villainies, by charging God to be Author of it, and of mans being neceſſitated thereto by his unalterable Decree. And as this Doctrine is full of Impiety in reſpect of God, ſo it contains no leſs fatal Abſurdities in regard to Men: For according to theſe Maxims of Fatality,

there would be no occaſion for Men to make uſe of Ships to paſs over the Seas, nor of Meat to nouriſh them; for a man has no more to do but to walk boldly upon the Waters: For if it be not his Deſtiny to be drown'd, he needs not fear to venture; but if it be his Deſtiny, no Bottom can preſerve him: neither needs a Man to eat, for if it be his Deſtiny to die by Famine, he'll never prevent it by eating; but if it be not his Deſtiny to die by Famine, he cannot periſh by forbearing. And yet this Doctrine, ſo abſurd as it is, is believ'd vulgarly by the *Turks*; tho we do not find the effects of it in their Practices, ſince in all their Exigencies of War, they have recourſe to Human Succours, and are capable of deſpair. This Doctrine was at firſt taught by their Impoſture Prophet, to render them more adventurous and reſolute in perillous Attempts.

But 'tis not ſufficient to refute this Opinion, by ſhewing the abſurdity of its Conſequence, but 'tis alſo requiſite to prove its falſhood, by ſhewing the Erroneous Principles on which it is built. I ſhall not here enter into a Theological Diſcourſe of God's Decrees, and Predeſtination as they are treated of in Divinity; the Method I propos'd does oblige me

me to ſpeak to theſe matters, ſo far only as they fall under the View and Informations of Reaſon; and this I have already done in ſome meaſure in the precedent Chapters: all that I ſhall add, or rather repeat at preſent, is, that the Source or Original of Mens Errors in this particular, is their miſunderſtanding of theſe two grand Points, God's Preſcience, and God's Cooperation with Men. Firſt, as to God's fore-knowledge of Human Actions, this does not take away the Liberty in the Agent; for then God himſelf would not be a free Agent; ſince he has from all Eternity a fore-knowledge alſo of whatſoever hereafter he himſelf ſhall do. Now for our better underſtanding this Point, we may take notice, that there is a twofold Liberty; the one Natural, when a thing is done without Lett or Obſtacle. Thus a River is ſaid to run freely, when there is no impediment or ſtop in its Courſe; this kind of Liberty implys a Natural Neceſſity. A Second kind of Liberty is that which is term'd Spontaneous, proper only to Rational Creatures, and conſiſts in a Power of doing or not doing a thing, and is oppos'd to Coaction: which ſort of Liberty, tho it imply a certainty of the effect, yet this certainty is deriv'd from the

Power of the Agent, which is free to act or not to Act; but being once ſuppos'd to act, it muſt of neceſſity produce the Effect which follows it. God therefore from all Eternity fore-ſees things ſo, and in no other manner than they ſhall hereafter come to paſs, together with the means by which they ſhall be produc'd. In things which will be produc'd by natural neceſſity, he foreſees them as things which ſhall of neceſſity come to paſs by ſuch and ſuch means: Likewiſe in effects, which ſhall proceed from free Agents, he foreſees them alſo, as iſſuing freely from ſuch and ſuch Cauſes.

As to Gods Cooperation and Concurrence with Men in Acts purely natural or moral, this likewiſe has been already ſpoken to, there being no more on God's part, but that common and general Influence which he affords indifferently to all his Creatures, by which they are ſupported in their Being and Actions, whilſt each rational Creature moves after its own peculiar way. Thus we ſee how the Planets are all carried from Eaſt to Weſt by that General and Diurnal Motion of the *Primum Mobile*; whilſt at the ſame time they have a peculiar Motion to themſelves, different from that of the thing which does ſuſtain them, and ſets them

them too agoing. A Globe or Cylinder, being plac'd upon a Plate of poliſh'd Steel, and once impreſs'd with the leaſt touch, moves it ſelf from place to place. Now if ſuch power can be communicated to things purely ſenſeleſs and inanimate, how much more eaſie is it for rational and free Agents, once inſpir'd with Life and Motion by God, to move themſelves by that Virtue they were inſpir'd with at their firſt beginnings? Beſides this general and natural Influx of God on the Actions of Rational Creatures, he is alſo ſaid to have a moral Influence, by inviting men to good Actions, and by detaining them from bad ones: yet this being no more than an Objective Influence, or ſuch as reſults from the Apprehenſions men have of Rewards and Puniſhments, it leaves them ſtill at their Liberty to Good or Evil, as we ſee by daily Experience. As for ſpiritual Actions, or thoſe of Grace, they require a ſpecial Influence from God; but theſe being things which have relation to reveal'd Religion, fall not under our preſent conſideration.

There is another kind of Fate which does much amuſe the World, being pretended to be derived from the Stars. That the Planets have a great Influence

upon Nature, by cauſing that great variety of Seaſons, Climats, general Contagions, exceſſive Rains and Drought, with other Events of this kind is unqueſtionable: and ſince the Diverſities and Conſtitutions of Countries do naturally incline men to ſuch and ſuch Tempers; and ſuch Tempers naturally diſpoſe men to ſuch and ſuch Qualities; it follows, that the Heavens have a remote and general Influence alſo upon the Actions of men; yet not ſo as to controul and determine them in their Liberty, ſince we find infinite Examples of men every where, who living under the ſame Climate, are notwithſtanding of very different Inclinations; and even Brethren, and ſometimes Twins (like *Caſtor* and *Pollux*) are led by different Studies, and purſue contrary Courſes of Life; or whatſoever Inclinations there be in Nature, they are eaſily overcome by the force of Example and Education. The Impoſtures of Aſtrologers, or ſuch as calculate Nativities are juſtly exploded by all men of Senſe and Learning. *Condon*, the ableſt man who ever pretended to this ſort of Knowledge, was ſhamefully miſtaken in his Judgment of *Henry* II. of *France*: for having calculated his Nativity, he foretold that he ſhould live a long

long and prosperous Life, when yet he was kill'd most unfortunately in a Tournament, and in the Flower of his Age. Men of this Profession are commonly called Fortune-Tellers, yet very improperly; they pretending rather to predict mens Fates; whereas Fortune is conversant about matters of chance and contingency. The Stoicks, so much in vogue as they were, might pass for better Moralists than Philosophers, since they taught that all things were govern'd by Destiny, and yet that man's Happiness, or the exercise of Vertue was a thing which lay within his own Power to acquire; Two Points diametrically opposite to one another.

Fortune Combats Providence in the other Extreme with Fate, and amongst the Ancients was held a Goddess; insomuch that all variable and extraordinary Events, whether good or evil, were ascrib'd to her: tho *Lucan* in a Poetick Rage allows her neither to be a Goddess, nor that there was any Deity whatsoever, when he exclaims

——(*Sunt nobis nulla profecto*
Numina; sed cæco rapiuntur sæcula casu.)

being mov'd thereto upon a Consideration

on of the unjuſt Fate which befell *Pompey* in his Wars with *Cæſar*. But *Juvenal*'s Conception was much better when he ſang,

Nullum Numen abeſt, ſi ſit Prudentia, ſed te Nos facimus, Fortuna, Deam—— Sat. 10.

intimating, that 'twas our Ignorance which gave the exiſtence to this imaginary Deity; which certainly is not only ſound Philoſophy, but ſound Divinity: For if we conſider the matter a little, we ſhall find, that what was call'd Fortune, is in reality no other but Providence; Providence in reſpect of the firſt Cauſe, who from all Eternity fore-ſaw the Event, and form'd Ends accordingly: But Fortune in reſpect of the ſecond Cauſe, to whom it hapned beſides Expectation. A Father diſguiſedly drops Money in his Garden, where his little Son is us'd to play; this he does to prove him whether he will bring it to him or keep it, or whether he be inclined to Theft or not: The Boy meeting with it, looks upon it as Fortune or Chance; at which the Father ſmiles to himſelf, knowing very well for what end he did it. Here we ſee, that what was chance to the Child, is a thing of mature deliberation in the Father,

ther. A Wiſe General, deſigning to ſurprize a City, ſends men diſguis'd like Peaſants, who contrivedly throw a loaded Cart at the Gate or Entrance of it, as tho 'twere by ſome ſiniſter Accident: Whereupon the Soldiers who lay in ambuſh win the Town: What then was a well-contriv'd Stratagem in the General, was look't upon we ſee by the improvident Citizens as a thing of Chance. Now if men who are all of the ſame natural Capacities, have yet in point of Conduct ſuch Power over others of the ſame kind, as to make them the Inſtruments of their own private Ends, unknown to thoſe by whom they are wrought, we may with certain reaſon conclude, there is a far more tranſcendent Power in God, who from that immenſe Proſpect he has of all future Things and Actions, and by himſelf giving Life and Soul to every living Creature, may with infinite eaſe ſo diſpoſe of all the Events and Occurrences of man's Life, and to ſuch Ends and Purpoſes, as the wiſeſt Spirits can never penetrate: ſo that what ſeems to them to be but Accidents and Contingencies, will be found in the Eye of the Wiſe Creator and Governor of the World, to be the unalterable Effects of a prudent and moſt ſteady Counſel.

CHAP.

CHAP. XII.

That God is to be Worſhipped.

FRom what has been hitherto prov'd through the Courſe and Connexion of the precedent Chapters, we may advance this farther Propoſition; That this God who is the Creator of the Univerſe, and preſides over all the Thoughts and Works of men, ought to be invok't and worſhipp'd: which Worſhip I ſhall reduce to theſe Four General Heads. Firſt, Adoration in reſpect of his Greatneſs, or as he is our Creator. Secondly, Invocation, in reſpect of his Power, or as he is our Protector. Thirdly, Thankfulneſs, in reſpect of his Goodneſs, and ſo he is our Benefactor: And Laſtly, Obedience, in reſpect of his Wiſdom, for ſo he is our Counſellor.

I ſhall begin firſt with Adoration: And here it is not my buſineſs to play the Critick, by ſhewing the ſeveral Acceptations of the Word in Claſſick Authors; I leave theſe Curioſities to Grammarians, and ſhall content my ſelf at preſent with ſuch a Notion of it, as is moſt eaſie and obvious. By Adoration then, I underſtand

ſtand nothing more but a profound proſtration of our ſelves, expreſs'd by all External Geſts of Body, and accompanied with an inward Horror of Mind, upon the Apprehenſion we have of the Greatneſs and Luſtre of the Object; as upon the apprehenſion alſo of our own unworthineſs: Now that ſuch a kind of Worſhip (and much greater, if it were poſſible for us to expreſs it) is moſt juſtly due to God, is clearer than any thing we can bring to prove it by. Conformable hereunto it is, that when we come before any Inferiour Magiſtrate, we expreſs a Reſpect by outward Signs and a ſubmiſſive Deportment; and ſo proportionably, the greater the Perſon is to whom we addreſs our ſelves. But when we are introduc'd to the Speech and Notice of our Sovereign, we feel a kind of Terror upon our Apprehenſion of his Character; we ought to look upon him (as really he is) a Vice-God; which Conſideration cannot but teach us to approach his Perſon as a thing which is Sacred, and Reverable; and this we are ready to expreſs by an humble proſtration of our Bodies, and by an inward Awe of our Minds, and by a Reſignation of our Wills to his juſt Commands. With how much care and ſubmiſſion then ought we to approach

the

the King of Kings, who gave us our Beings, and is the great Judge and Rewarder of all our Deeds? we ought certainly to throw our ſelves at his Feet, and to cover our Faces in the Duſt, and with a Religious Silence to attend his Pleaſure.

Of all the Heathen Idolaters, the ancient *Perſians* ſeem'd the moſt excuſable in their Adoration of the Son, a Creature of Eximious Beauty and Greatneſs, of wonderful Influence in the Production of all things, and by whoſe Warmth and Light we are made ſenſible of all the Bleſſings and Delights of Life: And yet this material Sun is but a Shadow or ſady Repreſentation of that inexpreſſible Glory which is inſeparable from God. Hence it was, that the Ancients did with all dread and ſtudied exactneſs celebrate their Religious Rites: They approach'd theſe Myſteries with a Reverential Silence, looking on Taciturnity as a thing very eſſential to Holy Functions: whence come theſe Forms of Speech ſo much us'd by the Prieſts, *Favete ore, Favete linguis*, at ſuch time as they enter'd upon any Religious Office: And as to their Ceremonies they were ſuperlatively Scrupulous; inſomuch that *Sulpitius* was degraded from the Prieſthood, becauſe

cauſe the Tuft of his Cap dropt off whilſt he was Offering a Sacrifice.

The Second Branch of Divine Worſhip conſiſts in Invocation, and this follows moſt Naturally from that Senſe we have of our dependance upon God, and of his Care and Government of the World. For as *Tully* well argues, "If "the Gods cannot or will not help us; "if they take no notice of what we do, "or if in the Courſe of our Lives we "derive no Benefit nor Succour from "them, I know not upon what Ground "it is, that we Worſhip them, and aſcribe "Honours, and direct our Prayers to "them; as I am doubtful alſo, that if "our Piety towards the Immortal Gods "ſhould once ceaſe and be neglected, "but that even Faith, Honeſty, Juſtice, "and Vertue, with whatſoever elſe re-"lates to Civil Society, would ſoon pe-"riſh and be forgotten—— This Conſideration he improves further, when he tells us, "That the Worſhip of the Gods "muſt be moſt Chaſt, moſt Holy, and "moſt full of Piety, and muſt therefore "iſſue from a Pure, Sincere, and Un-"corrupted Mind: For as much as not "only the Philoſophers, but even our "Anceſtors, ever made a difference be-"twixt Religion and Superſtition. They "who

Lib. 1. de Natura Deor.

" who Sacrific'd and Pray'd whole days
" together, *ut ſui liberi ſibi ſuperſtites eſ-*
" *ſent*, that their Children might ſurvive
" them, are called Superſtitious, which
" Appellation afterwards became of lar-
" ger extent; but they who did dili-
" gently ponder on whatſoever related
" to the Service of the Gods, were cal-
" led Religious *ex Relegendo*, from their
" frequent and repeated Meditations on
" that Subject. Whoſoever has but lightly read the Monuments of Antiquity, cannot but obſerve, that in all their Worldly Affairs, whether of Peace or War, for choeſing their Magiſtrates, or for any other Function whatſoever, the firſt thing they did was to offer up their Prayers, to obſerve their Augurs, and to perform ſome Sacred Rites. Invocation conſiſts in Three Duties, *viz.* Supplication, when we pray for ſomething which we want: Deprecation, when we pray to be deliver'd from ſomething we ſuffer, or are afraid of; and laſtly Interceſſion, when we pray for others. And yet Supplication amongſt the *Romans* comprehended Deprecation, and ſignified alſo Thankſgiving, as will appear in the next Chapter.

The Third Branch of Divine Worſhip is Thankfulneſs to God, as our Bountiful

Bountiful Benefactor: Gratitude is a Duty so rivetted in Nature, that those who deviate from it are more degnerate than Beasts, since the most Savage Animals become tractable and gentle to those by whom they are nourish'd, and some have requited the Benefit they have receiv'd, after a long course of Time, in a way very Extraordinary and Miraculous; others have pin'd away and died for Grief at the Graves of their Masters; and even Dogs, which are naturally most Fierce and Ravenous, will still express a Love for those by whom they are reliev'd and fed, not only by a familiar Fondness, but by an uncorrupted Fidelity for their Master's Safety and Concerns. Now if Beasts are thus sensible of their Obligation, and express, though dumb, their Gratitude to their fellow Creatures, what infinite measures of Thankfulness are due from Man towards God, from whom he derives his Life with all his Enjoyments. The Heathens, though they had no other Light but that of Nature, had a clear sight of their Duty in this Particular, in the many Games they Instituted to the Memory of their Gods, for some remarkable Benefits they receiv'd. The *Greeks*, besides their *Olympick* Games so much Celebrated, and In-

ſtituted by *Hercules* in Honour of *Jupiter*, had alſo other Games, as the *Pythian*, Inſtituted by *Diomedes*, near *Delphi* in *Phocis*, in Memory of the *Python* ſlain by *Apollo*. No leſs famous were the *Iſthmian* Games, Inſtituted by *Theſeus* in the *Iſthmus* of *Achaia* near *Corinth*, in Honour of *Palæmon* a Sea God: To which may be added alſo the *Nemæan* Games, in Honour of *Achemorus*, or rather of *Hercules*, in Memory of the Lyon which he ſlew in the *Nemæan* Woods. In Imitation of the *Greeks*, the *Romans* alſo had their ſolemn Games in Honour of their Gods: Thoſe of the *Circus* were Sacred to *Neptune*, their *Scenick Shews* began about the 394. Year after the building of *Rome*, at ſuch time as they were direly afflicted with Peſtilence, and were firſt brought thither and Practis'd by the *Etrurians*, a moſt Superſtitious ſort of People, whom the *Romans* ever held in great Veneration in Matters of Religious Rites. But beſides their Games, the Ancients had other Monuments to teſtifie their Obligation to Divine Bounty. Their Firſt Fruits, their Votive Tables, the Tenth of their Spoils, their Trophies, together with their Altars and Temples, were all as ſo many laſting Marks of Thanks for the Grace and Mercies they receiv'd.

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The Laſt Branch of Divine Worſhip reſpects God as our Counſellor, being grounded in our Obedience and Submiſſion to his Will, upon the Account of his Wiſdom and Juſtice. This as it is the laſt, ſo is it the chiefeſt Duty of a Vertuous Mind, as being the Center of that Repoſe which a man feels within himſelf, upon the Belief he has of a preſiding Providence, which cannot but Order all his Concerns in the beſt and wiſeſt way. The Laws and Benefits of this Noble Duty are excellently well deſcrib'd by the Heathen Philoſopher, or rather the moſt Chriſtian *Seneca* in this following Diſcourſe. " I will ſubmit to all Diffi- Lib. de vit. beatâ.
" culties and Labours whatſoever, and
" ſo Prop up the Frailty of my Body
" with the Force and Reſolutions of my
" Mind. I will have the ſame Contempt
" for the Riches I poſſeſs as for thoſe I
" want; and as I ſhall not look more De-
" jected when they are withdrawn, ſo
" neither will I be Exalted when they
" flow in upon me with the greateſt Afflu-
" ence and Luſtre. I will not be Tran-
" ſported when I find Fortune coming
" towards or going from me; for I
" will look on other mens Eſtates as
" mine own, and mine as though they
" did belong to others, leading ſuch a

" Life as though I were born for the ſake
" of others, and upon this Score I ſhall
" ever be thankful: Whatſoever I Poſſeſs
" ſhall not be hoarded up ſordidly, nor
" waſted profuſely, believing ever, that
" I do poſſeſs no more than what I am
" able to employ to good Uſes. I ſhall
" not meaſure Benefits by their Bulk and
" Number, but rather value them by the
" Worth of the Receiver, never deem-
" ing it too much which is beſtow'd upon
" a deſerving Perſon. I will do nothing
" upon the Score of Opinion and Popu-
" larity, but upon the Account of Con-
" ſcience: And whatſoever I ſhall do by
" my ſelf alone, I will imagine it to be
" done in the ſight of the Sun, and upon
" the greateſt Theatre, and in the fulleſt
" Confluence of Men. I will reſtrain
" the Deſires of Nature, by giving Mea-
" ſures to eating and drinking, and not
" live only to fill and empty my Belly: I
" will be chearful with my Friends, re-
" concilable with my Enemies: I will
" grant before I am entreated, and meet
" a Petition half way. In fine; I will
" look upon the wide World as my Coun-
" try, and I ſhall believe the preſiding
" Gods, to be ever near me, and to ob-
" ſerve and cenſure all my Words and
" Actions; and whenſoever Nature or

" any

"any Accident whatſoever ſhall put a "Period to my Life, I ſhall part with it "willingly, and with this aſſurance, that "I have ever lov'd a good Conſcience "and honeſt Endeavours, and that no "Mans Liberty was ever loſt by my ill "Behaviour, much leſs mine own. He "who propoſes ſuch Ends as theſe, and "acts accordingly, needs not doubt but "he ſhall be admitted into the Light and "Fellowſhip of the Gods. Thus far he. This certainly was great Advice from a Heathen, and if his Life were anſwerable, I durſt pronounce him happy.

CHAP. XIII.

Of the Religious Worſhip of the Heathens.

NOW ſince Divine Worſhip is not only determin'd to private Duties, and to a paſſive Reſignation of our Wills to that of the Supream Governour and Moderator of all things, but does require alſo ſome Publick Forms, to prevent thoſe great Errors to which an unguided Liberty does betray men. Our next Enquiry muſt be after this Point alſo, and

this no other than what we call Religion. But before I advance to further Inference, I think it neceſſary to make ſome few Remarks upon Religion in General, in the Publick Worſhip of a Deity, which amongſt the *Romans*, according to *Valerius Maximus*, was reſolv'd into theſe Four Points. Firſt, Their ſtated and ſolemn Ceremonies, and thoſe were appointed by the *Pontifices*. Secondly, The right of doing things depended upon the Obſervation of their *Augurs*. Thirdly, The Predictions of *Apollo*, and theſe were contain'd in the Books of their *Vates* and *Sybils*. And Laſtly, Their Judgment and Removal of Portents or ill Omens, by the Exorciſms of the *Etrurians*, or of ſuch as follow'd the Rites and Diſcipline of that Superſtitious People. Moreover, according to the Ancient Cuſtom in Matters Sacred, when any thing was recommended to the Gods, it was called *Prayer*; when any thing was requeſted of them, it was by *Vows*; when any thing was to be repaid to them, it was call'd *Giving of Thanks*: When any Deſign was on foot, or any Publick Buſineſs to be done, they had Recourſe to *Augurs*, or Conſulted the Entrails; and when any thing was to be Perform'd by ſolemn Rites, it was by *Sacrifices*. And ſo great

Lib. 1. c. 1.

were

were the Endeavours of the Ancients, not only in preſerving, but alſo in amplifying their Religion, that there were ſent from *Rome*, by Order of the Senate, Ten Youths of the Nobleſt Hopes and Families, who were recommended to the like Number of Cities in *Etruria*, there to be Imbued and Diſciplin'd in their Religious Myſteries.

The Religion of the Ancient *Romans* as to its Hiſtory, is ſomething intricate and perplext. Nevertheleſs I ſhall endeavour to give ſome ſmall Account of it, as I find it Recorded; and this too in the cleareſt and ſhorteſt Method that I can; this being very Preparatory to the main Scope and Deſign I have in hand. The Sum of what I meet with then upon this Subject, may be reduc'd under theſe Two General Heads, Religious Perſons and Religious Offices. As to Religious Perſons, they were of two ſorts, *Prieſts* and *Augurs*: Firſt I ſhall begin with their Prieſts.

Apud Alexand. ab Alexand. lib. Genial. Dier.

Numa Pompilius, the firſt Founder of Religion amongſt the *Romans*, was himſelf a Prieſt or *Pontifex*. Afterwards there was a College of theſe *Pontifices*, which at firſt conſiſted only of Four Perſons; but in courſe of Time, as the Empire grew greater and greater, this

College had its enlargments alſo, ſo that *Sylla* made their Number to be Fifteen; amongſt whom there was one who Govern'd the reſt, who was called *Pontifex Maximus*: It belong'd to this College to Inſtitute and Interpret Ceremonies both Publick and Private, and to determine what Gods were to be Worſhipp'd, and with what Altars, Temples, and Sacrifices: 'Twas their Buſineſs alſo to appoint Holy-days, called *Feriæ*, on which men ceas'd from their ordinary Employments, that they might with greater Devotion attend on Sacred Duties. Moreover it did belong to them to ſee that the Worſhip of the Gods was not Corrupted, by introducing Foreign Rites and Ceremonies, and to take care of what related to Funeral Rites and Sepulture; and to Preſcribe Forms of Atonement for the Ghoſts of the Dead, by certain Rites and Sacrifices, called *Inferiæ*; to conſider alſo of Vows, and to Preſcribe Publick Forms of Prayer and Supplications, or ſolemn Proceſſions. 'Twas the Duty of the *Pontifex Maximus* to make Annals of what was done or happen'd, and to enter the ſame into a Regiſter call'd *Album*; in which Book alſo were enter'd all Publick Decrees and Conſtitutions, together with the Names

ſome-

ſometimes of thoſe who bore Office. In fine, it was his Province to preſide over the College of *Pontifices*, to whom alſo the *Rex Sacrorum*, the *Augurs*, the *Flamines* and Veſtal Virgins were ſubject, and puniſhable by his Cenſor. The Function of the Pontificate was ever held in ſo great Veneration, that the chiefeſt Magiſtrates were ambitious of it, ſuch as *Licinius Craſſus*, *Julius Cæſar*, and many others: And in token of Grandeur, the *Pontifex* was allow'd his *Lictor* or Sergeant, with his Ax and Rods: He was allow'd alſo his Litter, and a *Curule Chair*, or Seat of State, with other Ornaments proper only to the greateſt Officers. Nor was any man capable of this Sacred Employ, but ſuch as had born ſome Office of State; and withal, he was not like other Magiſtrates, compellable to give Account of the Adminiſtration of his Charge. This Sacred College of Prieſts were called *Pontifices*, from a Wooden Bridge in *Rome*, called *Pons Sublicius*, which they were oblig'd to maintain, and was held ſo Sacred, that whenſoever it was to be repair'd (as it was often) nothing could be done till the Victim was ſlain, and the Work made auſpicious by a ſolemn Sacrifice. This Cuſtom ſtill continu'd till the Times

of

of *Æmylius* the Treaſurer, who built this Bridge of Stone. The Scribes and under Officers of this Sacred College were call'd *Pontifices Minores*, and perform'd alſo ſome Sacred and Inferiour Functions.

There was one amongſt the Prieſts, who was called *Rex Sacrorum*, for as much as he was appointed to exerciſe theſe Sacred Functions, which belong'd formerly to their Kings. But the Kingly Government being aboliſh'd, they conferr'd their Religious Power on this Officer; and leaſt the Name of *Rex* might create in him any deſire of Empire and Regal Dominion, they made him utterly uncapable of any Military or Civil Office, confining his Authority only to Religious Rites, over which he did preſide. And particularly it did belong to the *Rex Sacrorum*, to Sacrifice a Ram to *Janus* upon the Fifth of the Ides of *January*. In all their Sacred Banquets, or Pontificial Feaſts, he ſate next to the *Pontifex Maximus*, and above the *Flamines* of *Jupiter*, *Mars* and *Romulus*.

The *Flamines* had their Original from *Numa*, who Inſtituted one that was call'd *Dialis*, or the Prieſt of *Jupiter*, to whom were added two more *Flamines* or Prieſts, one who preſided over the Service or Sacred

cred Functions of *Mars*, called *Martialis*; the other over thoſe of *Romulus*, called *Quirinalis*; but in after Times the Number of the *Flamines* was augmented alſo to Fifteen, all which were denominated from the reſpective Gods, to whoſe Service they were appointed. Every Diſtrict or Ward alſo had its *Flamines* or Prieſts, who like our Biſhops were called *Curiales*. Moreover, in every Tribe or Ward there were appointed other Inferiour Miniſters, whoſe Buſineſs it was to perform Religious Duties up and down the Villages, for the Devotion and Benefit of the Common People, much reſembling our Pariſh Prieſts. They were called *Flamines*, *quaſi Filamines*; for when by the extremity of Heat they could not wear their Caps or Bonnets peculiar to their Order, they were allow'd to bind their Heads, with a ſmall Filet or Ribband, in form of a Diadem, it being forbidden them to be ſeen at any time altogether bare-headed. However on Feſtivals, and at Solemn times of Officiating, they were oblig'd to wear their Bonnets, though the heat were never ſo great; which Bonnets had a ſmall Rod of Olives faſtned on them, at the Top whereof ſtuck a little Tuft or Boſs of Cotton. There were alſo other Colleges

leges of Prieſts, of great Antiquity, as the Prieſts of *Mars*, called *Salii* (*à ſaliendo*) from dancing about the Streets on ſolemn days, and beating their little Swords against the Sacred Shields, made in imitation of that which was ſaid to be ſent from Heaven in the time of *Numa*, wherein conſiſted the Fate and Safety of *Rome*. The *Luperci* or Prieſts of *Pan* were ſaid to be Inſtituted by *Romulus* and *Remus*, upon the Death of their Grand-Father *Numitor*. They were us'd to run about the Streets naked, having only a Goats Skin over them, and with ſmall Thongs of Goats Leather dipt in the Blood of the Sacrifice, they us'd to ſtrike the Palms of the Hands of ſuch Women as deſir'd Fecundity. The *Romans* alſo had a Fraternity of Prieſts called *Arvales*, appointed by *Romulus* for the Benediction of the Corn Fields, with many other Orders alſo, too long to be now inſiſted on.

The *Augurs* were a Society of Religious Perſons, who were lookt upon as the *Internuncii* or Interpreters of the Gods, and muuh differing in Office from the Prieſts. Their Number was ſmall at firſt, growing greater and greater, proportionably to the extent of the Empire. Their College was Compos'd of Twenty four

four Members in the time of *Sylla*'s Dictatorſhip. They were ſaid to be Inſtituted by *Romulus*, who himſelf was a very expert *Augur*. It was their Office to Prognoſticate future Events from the flight and chattering of Birds, to inſpect the Entrails of Beaſts, and interpret Dreams, as alſo to make a Judgment of Prodigies and Monſters, of Tempeſts, Thunders and Earthquakes: To explain Oracles and the Prophecies of the *Sybills*. They were alſo Judges of the Election of Magiſtrates, in ſo much that the Dictators, Conſuls and Prætors, with other Officers of greateſt Power, were oftentimes depos'd by the *Augurs*, if their Promotion did appear to be Un-canonical and Defective; alſo they could diſſolve their Aſſemblies, and ſuſpend Proceedings, if things appear'd inauſpicious. Moreover they held their Office for Term of Life, whereas the *Pontifices* might be degraded from the Prieſthood for divers Cauſes. No wonder then if the greateſt Magiſtrates were ambitious of this Office. *Fabius Maximus* is ſaid to have held the Augurſhip Sixty two years unto his Death; and *Julius Cæſar* when he uſurp'd all the great Offices upon his ſubverſion of the Common-wealth, aſſum'd alſo that of the Augurſhip, as appears by the *Lituus*

on

on his Money. The *Augurs* were us'd to make their Obſervations ſitting, and wore a Veil upon their Heads, and were cloath'd with a long Robe or Veſt of Purple and Scarlet. He had alſo a crooked Staff in his Hand, and winding at the end like a Rams-horn, call'd a *Lituus*, with which he markt and quarter'd out the Heavens into ſeveral Regions: After this a Victim being ſlain, he recited certain Forms of Prayers or Verſes, and then with Eyes directed towards Heaven, he applied himſelf with a profound ſilence and attention to make his Obſervations; and for the better performance of theſe Rites, the *Augurs* ever made choice of the open Campaign, and of the faireſt days, leaſt their Obſervations ſhould be obſtructed by the Winds and Clouds. Neither was it lawful for all the *Augurs*, but only for the Preſident of the College, to make a Judgment from the Phænomena of Heaven.

Religious Functions amongſt the *Romans* were generally theſe Three. Firſt, Sacrifices: Secondly, Luſtrations: and Laſtly Supplications. The Sacrifices were of two kinds; Firſt, thoſe by which they enquir'd into the Will of God by Obſervation of the Entrails, and theſe might be call'd Exploratory: Next

ſuch, where the Life of the Beaſt was Conſecrated to God, and this kind of Sacrifices might be call'd Animal, and might be term'd alſo Expiatory, ſince by theſe they endeavour'd to appeaſe the Anger of their Gods; though they were ſometimes offer'd up alſo to make them Propitious; and ſometimes alſo as Teſtimonies of Gratitude. Each God had his peculiar Sacrifice. To *Jupiter* they offer'd a whole Bullock without blemiſh, or any Spot of Black, and ſuch as had never been yok'd, though the *Greeks* were wont to Sacrifice a Ram. The Bull was Sacrific'd to *Apollo*, *Mars*, and *Neptune*, as a Goat to *Pan*; a Lamb to *Juno*, a Hart to *Diana*, and a Dove to *Venus*. To *Ceres* they Sacrific'd a Sow great with young; which kind of Sacrifice was called *Amburvale*; for at ſuch time as the Corn and Fruits began to be ripe, they led the Sacrifice thrice about the Fields, all the People following and ſinging certain Verſes ſuitable to the Occaſion; where one alſo was appointed to Celebrate the Praiſes of *Ceres* by a ſolemn Hymn and Dance, and when they had made an Offering of Wine, Milk, and Honey, they kill'd the Sacrifice.

This ſeems to have been the Courſe and Method of their Sacrifices. Such a Beaſt being

being choſen out as was without Defect and Blemiſh, yet they caſt Fruits upon the Head of it, as alſo Meal temper'd with Salt and Water. This Compoſition was called *Mola*; from whence it was, that he who Sacrific'd was ſaid to *Immolate*; Moreover he ſprinkled Frankincenſe betwixt his Horns: This being done, the Victim was ſaid to be *mactata*; that is, duly prov'd and prepar'd. Being brought to the Altar, and before the Wine was pour'd on it, the Prieſt ſipp'd ſome of it in a little Diſh of Wood or Earth, called *Sympulum*, offering the ſame to thoſe who were round about him, that they might drink alſo. This Ceremony was called *Libamen*, as was that which follow'd, *viz.* When the Prieſt plucking only the Hairs that grew betwixt the Horns of the Victim, caſt them into the Fire; afterwards turning himſelf towards the *Eaſt*, (for they ever Sacrific'd in the Morning with regard to the Riſing Sun) he ſoftly drew his Knife over the Back of the Sacrifice, from the Head to the hinder Parts. Theſe Ceremonies being over (which were called *Prelibations*) the Prieſt commanded the Miniſters who ſtood by (who were called *Cultrarii*, and ſometimes *Agones*) to Immolate; that is, to kill and flay the Sacrifice, which being done

done with many Ceremonies, the Prieſt ſtrictly examin'd the Entrails, which he was not to touch with his Hands, but with ſome Hallowed Inſtrument appointed for that purpoſe: And if they found all things proſperous, they did cut off ſome part or Portion of the Members or Bowels, which were called *Primitiæ*; which being ſprinkled with Flour, were offered to the Sacrificer; who burnt them upon the Altar; what remain'd of the Sacrifice was boil'd or roaſted, and eaten by thoſe who aſſiſted at it: Tho ſometimes all was burnt upon the Altar. Moreover they had a ſpecial Regard to this, *viz.* Whether the Beaſt came willingly or unwillingly to the Altar, looking upon the latter as an Omen of ill Preſage, and that it was not acceptable to the Gods. All their Sacrifices were accompanied with Prayers and Hymns, in Honour of the Deity to whom they offer'd them: which Hymns or Verſes had ſeveral Names. That in praiſe of *Apollo*, was called a *Pæan*, or *Proſodia*; of *Bacchus*, *Dithyrambus*; of *Venus*, *Eroticus*, &c. All which were accompanied with Muſick, and ſometimes with Dancing.

'Tis worth our notice to conſider with what preparation the Prieſts addreſs'd themſelves to theſe ſolemn Sacrifices;

they purified themſelves with Water, and for ſome time before abſtain'd from all ſorts of Fleſh, and the uſe of *Venus*. Tho amongſt the *Greeks*, many times, none were ſuffered to perform theſe Sacred Functions, but ſuch as liv'd in Celebacy: The Prieſt when he offer'd was attir'd in a long White Robe, and wore a Veil; and at ſuch time as he was about to enter upon any Sacred Function, he endeavour'd to purge himſelf by a Confeſſion, and to expreſs his Sorrow and Penitence, not only by Words, but in the Humility of his Looks, having his Eyes fixt upon the Earth: whereupon the Officer or *Præco*, cry'd aloud [*Hoc age*] thereby requiring all the People to be attentive to what they were about, and to keep ſilence: And ſo much briefly for their Sacrifices.

Their Luſtrations, Expiations, or Purifications, were generally of Two ſorts: Firſt, By Ablution or Sprinkling of Water: Or, Secondly, by Fire, which was no other but Cenſing: and this was done ſeveral ways; either by the Leaves of Bays, Vervein and Myrtle caſt on burning Coals; or chiefly by Sulphur, and a piece of Pine-wood, in manner of a Torch, which was called *Tæda*; which by reaſon of its Roſin burnt eaſily, and yielded a kind of Perfume or Smoke, (like

(like that of Frankincenſe) as did alſo the forementioned Leaves; to which Smells they alſo attributed a purifying Virtue. Sometimes they us'd Oil and Pitch together with Sulphur: And ſometimes the Luſtration alſo was made by Sacrifices: All which kind of Rites and Ceremonies were us'd on divers Occaſions, and applied almoſt to every thing. But the Ceremony eſpecially, with which *Rome* was luſtrated every Five Years, was a thing of great Pomp: This was perform'd in *February*; (ſo call'd from *Februus*, who preſided over the Luſtration, to whom alſo they offer'd a Sacrifice,) at which time the Cenſor, in the greateſt Aſſembly of the Magiſtrates, invok'd the Tutelar Gods of *Rome*, with ſolemn Forms, *viz.* That they would defend the Empire, their Cities, Temples, and Waters from dangers; that they would be aſſiſting to them in times of difficulty, and avert Calamities: Vowing alſo ſomething at the next Luſtre; and then made their ſolemn Proceſſion about the City and Suburbs in this following Order: Firſt went the *Pontifices*; after them the *Flamines*, and *Augurs*, with other Inferior Prieſts: After theſe march'd the Veſtals; then the *Septem viri Epulorum*, or thoſe who had the charge and ordering

of the Pontifical Feaſts, who were followed by the *Quindecim viri Saliorum*, or the Maſters of the Sacred Rites; together with the Senators and Common People. And ſo ſcrupulous were they in their Ceremonies, that if an Owl or Woif came at any time into the Capitol, the City was preſently to be Luſtrated, or purg'd by a Torch and Sulphur, and this was called *Victima Amburvalis*.

Supplications amongſt the *Romans* were alſo ſolemn Proceſſions, and not much differing from their *Quinquennial* Luſtrations; only the latter was fixt to a certain Revolution of Years; whereas their Supplications were indicted upon ſome ſudden and extraordinary Emergency; and they were of two kinds: Firſt, Imploratory: Secondly, Gratulatory. Their ordinary Supplications laſted only Nine Days, and were called *Novemdialia*: But beſides theſe, they made general Supplications at ſuch time as they engag'd in any Foreign War, or when they were upon the defence of their Country, their Temples and Religion. Many times they had recourſe alſo to Supplications for the appeaſing of the Gods, as upon the Apparition of Two Suns, or of Comets; as alſo in caſe of Earth-quakes, furious Tempeſts, Showers of Blood, and extra-

ordinary

ordinary Inundations of *Tyber*; or when the Temples and Publick Edifices were ſtruck by Lightning; or upon any other Prodigy of this Nature. The *Pontifex Maximus*, with the other Sacred Orders, began the Solemnity, and were followed many times by the Senators, with their Wives and Children, together with the ſeveral Tribes: the young Men, Virgins, and Matrons alſo had their place and ſhare in the Ceremony, crown'd with Garlands, and with Laurels in their Hands, they ſang certain Verſes in a low and humble Voice, by which they implor'd the Mercy of the Gods; and ſo they viſited the Capitol and Temples; but eſpecially thoſe Sacred Chappels, in which were the *Lectiſternia*, or *Pulvinaria*; that is, Beds of Repoſe for the Gods; which Beds were moſt richly adorn'd, and had for their Pillows little Bundles, or Toſſels of *Vervien* (a Plant of moſt Sacred uſe amongſt the *Romans*;) which *Lectiſternia* alſo were raiſed on high, and overlook'd the Altars. The chiefeſt Beds of Majeſty were for *Jupiter*, *Vulcan*, and *Minerva*, becauſe theſe Three were chiefly look'd upon to have the Power of the Thunderbolt.

The other ſort of Supplications were Gratulatory, much like our Jubilees, where

all the Orders, both of Men and Women, whether Sacred or Civil, and cloath'd in their richeſt Ornaments and Habits, made like the Solemn Proceſſions in viſiting the Temples, and offering up their Thanks by ſinging of Hymns, Perfuming the Altars, and making of Feaſts, with other Marks of Publick Joy; which Supplications laſted for many Days, and were granted upon the Account of ſome ſignal Victory, or for the good Succeſs in their Wars, or any other publick Undertaking. *Julius Cæſar* having fought proſperouſly in ſubduing the *Gaules*, obtain'd Supplications, or a Jubilee of Sixteen Days. *Brutus*, after he had the better of *Marcus Antonius* in the War of *Medena*, obtain'd a Jubilee which laſted Fifty Days: One alſo of the like continuance was indicted by *Cicero* in the Senate, at ſuch time as the War was proſperous to *Octavius*. Theſe Supplications were always made during the Abſence of the General, for whoſe ſake they were granted, excepting that of *Cicero*; for whom, tho preſent, a Supplication was indicted, in conſideration of the great Service he did in defending the Commonwealth from *Catiline*'s Conſpiracy. In ſhort, Theſe Supplications were uſually the Preludes of Triumphs: Foraſmuch as they for

for whom Supplications were decreed, whilſt they were employ'd abroad in the War, obtain'd a Triumph at their Return when the War was finiſh'd.

The Religion of the *Greeks* was much the ſame with that of the *Romans*; for they had the ſame Deities, and almoſt the ſame Rites and Sacrifices. From whence alſo we may proceed to take a tranſient View of the Rites and Ceremonies of the *Jews*, which conſiſted alſo in ſeveral Orders of Prieſts, Sacrifices, Luſtrations, Jubilees, Feaſts, *&c.* only they differ'd in the Object of Worſhip, adoring the One True and only God, to whom they erected one only Temple at *Jeruſalem*, where they perform'd their Solemn Functions: Tho they had their Synagogues or Sacred Aſſemblies alſo every where wherein they taught and preach'd, and did ſome leſſer Rites. Their obſervation of the Sabbath, as alſo Circumciſion, were the more diſtinguiſhing marks by which they differ'd from all the World. Tho the latter we find to have been obſerved alſo by the *Iſhmaelites* or *Arabians*, as deſcending from *Abraham*.

The Prieſthood was ever held amongſt all Nations in great Eſteem, which they expreſs'd chiefly by honouring the Perſons of thoſe who attended on it with

glorious Titles, ſplendid Ornaments, plentiful Maintenance, large Exemptions and Privileges, and with all External Marks of Obſervance and Veneration: If we do not find the ſame in the Age we live in, this in ſome meaſure poſſibly may be the fault of the Perſons themſelves; many of which being of deſpicable Parts and Extraction, of uncultivated Behaviour, and of Sordid, Covetous, and perhaps Scandalous Lives, caſt a Cloud upon the Function: and had they liv'd amongſt the Heathens, they would have been thought worthy of no other Prieſtly Employment but that of butchering the Beaſts; which yet ſeem to be much more innocent and gentle. Tho it be very probable alſo, that as Men decline in their Morals, and all Sentiments of Piety, ſo they think to extenuate their Enormities, by expoſing the Prieſts to the ſame Contempt under which they have brought themſelves by their degenerate Lives; which in all likelihood will let in Atheiſm. For when Men have a true Belief of the Religion they profeſs, they cannot but ſhew a ſuitable Reſpect for thoſe who are the Inſtruments of conveying to them all the Benefits and Bleſſings of it. However it be, a few particular Deviations cannot deſtroy univerſal Maxims, no more than the Heavens

Heavens can be ſaid to be impure and corruptible, from a few falling Meteors, or ſome ſmoaky Comets. The Body of Men through all Age and Regions of the World, have ever held Religion in high Veneration, as in ſome ſhort meaſure hath been already delivered. So that to uſe the reaſonings of *Tully*, "the Perſwaſion "Men have of Religion, and of the Di- "vine Nature is not founded upon any "Conference and Conſent of men, nor "derived from any Laws and Sanctions "whatſoever: But the general Concur- "rence of all Nations in the belief of a- "ny thing, can be nothing elſe but the "Law of Nature. And conſequently hence it was, that many of thoſe Ceremonies in uſe amongſt the *Gentiles*, were in uſe alſo amongſt the Primitive Chriſtians, and may ſtill be retain'd in the Church, as being of great ſignification, and ſuch as ſerve to expreſs mens inward Senſe and Veneration of the Divine Majeſty. Tuſcul. Quæſt. lib. 1.

Having thus took a tranſient View of ſome Religious Practices amongſt the Ancients, I now return into my old Road; where I ſhall endeavour to make a more ſtrict Enquiry of the Truth and Verity of Religion. Which that we may the better underſtand, I ſhall reduce Religion

ligion to theſe Two Generals, Natural, and Reveal'd. By Natural Religion I underſtand ſuch Notions as Contemplative and vertuous Perſons have arriv'd to by the light of Natural Reaſon. By Reveal'd, I underſtand only ſuch Religions as are at this time in Vogue, and were pretended to be authorized by an immediate Voice from Heaven: 'Tis true, all the Ancient Founders of Religion pretended alſo to Revelation: But their Religion being Converſant about falſe Deities, and being extinct long ago, I ſhall now conſider ſuch different Religions as at this Day divide the World, and have the True God for the Object of their Worſhip, by whom alſo they believe it was reveal'd; and they are theſe Three: the *Jewiſh*, the *Chriſtian*, and the *Mahometan*.

CHAP. XIV.

Of the Jewiſh *Nation and Religion.*

IN the *Jewiſh* Religion there are Two things to be conſidered; its Authority, and its Duration. Firſt for its Authority: To us who are educated in the belief

belief that the Old Teſtament is the Word of God, there is no place left for any Doubt or Queſtion: So that in this Point, both *Jews* and *Chriſtians* agree together. But then were we to diſpute with the *Gentiles*, ſuch as *Porphyrius*, *Jamblicus*, *Celſus*, and the reſt, who denied the Divine Authority of the Scriptures; we muſt have recourſe to other Medium's, and ſuch to which theſe Diſſenters would ſtand. Leaving therefore the Teſtimonies which the Scriptures themſelves give of their own Authority, we ſhall find the validity of their credit demonſtrable from ſuch Circumſtances and Natural Influences of Reaſon, as the moſt obſtinate Sceptick cannot poſſibly withſtand. The Proofs which I ſhall bring for the Authority of the *Jewiſh* Religion are three. The firſt is taken from a Conſideration of the *Jewiſh* Nation in General. The Second from the Authority of the Old Teſtament. The laſt from the Certainty of its Predictions.

And firſt for the *Jewiſh* Nation: 'Tis well known, that as they were the leaſt, being confin'd to a narrow Tract of Ground, not exceeding One hundred and twenty Miles in length, and Forty in breadth; ſo were they a People of groſs Intellectuals, compar'd with the *Egyptians*,

ans, *Syrians*, and *Babylonians*, who ſurrounded them: They were not any way addicted to the Philoſophy of the *Greeks*; nor to the Ancient Learning of the *Chaldeans*; nor any way curious in Mechanical Inventions: They were not dignified or diſtinguiſhed by Titles, but liv'd contentedly, and in a ſtate of Equality, each within the limits of his own Tribe, improving their Patrimony by all Methods of good Husbandry in manuring the Earth, and living frugally. From whence it appears plainly, that a People of this Genius could never invent ſuch a Religion as ſhould have the one only God, the Great Creator of Heaven and Earth for the Scope and Object of their Adoration. Neither could they receive Notions of this Nature from any of their forementioned Neighbours; it being known to all the World, that all the Nations round about them were groſs Idolaters, and held no conformity with the *Jews* in their Rites and Manners of Life.

We have a Deſcription of the Perfection and Purity of their Religion in the beſt of Heathen Authors: For *Tacitus* tells us, that the *Jews* worſhipped one only Deity, *mente ſola*; deteſting thoſe as prophane who repreſented the Gods under

Tac. lib. 5. hiſtor.

der the groſs Shapes and Images of Men; believing the one Supreme God to be Eternal and Immutable. But whatſoever their Belief was, we find their Practice to be many times very degenerate.

For our better illuſtration therefore of this Argument, 'twill not be amiſs to take a ſhort view of their Diſpoſitions and Actions, as they are repreſented to us in their own Acts and Monuments. The *Jewiſh* Nation were a People ſeparated from the reſt of men, by many ſignal Favours and Prerogatives. They had lain almoſt Four hundred Years under the Yoke of *Egypt*; till at length (God remembring his Promiſes) does raiſe them up a Deliverer, *Moſes*; who by many Wonders reſcu'd them from under the Hand of the Oppreſſor. As for *Pharaoh* and his Hoſt, he overthrew them in the Red Sea: And 'twas but meet they ſhould be overwhelm'd in the Waters, who were firſt drown'd in Security and Impenitence. But for *Iſrael* to forget God, that God who had done ſo great things for them, was as Prodigious as their very Deliverance. They left *Egypt*, 'tis true, but yet they ſtill continu'd in the Land of Darkneſs, and were harder than the Rock which obey'd the Rod,

Rod, and yielded Waters to quench thoſe Heats which their own Luſts had firſt kindled. They reſiſted the Lord their Deliverer, in their Murmurings againſt *Moſes* and *Aaron.* Nor did they only contend with *Moſes* their Civil Governour; but they ſought the Prieſthood alſo, ſaying, *Ye take too much upon you, ſeeing all the Congregation is holy, every one of them.* And ſtrange was their Preſumption, when they knew no other way to make an Atonement but by committing Sacrilege, I mean by offering up of ſtrange Fire, ſuch as made them both Prieſts and Sacrifice: And as tho all remembrance of the Judgment, had been buried with *Korah* and his Company; they offer'd a freſh Indignity, ſaying, *Ye have killed the people of the Lord*: Inſomuch that God ſlew 14700 of them in a Moment. To be ſhort; whoſoever takes a Proſpect of their Forty Years Pilgrimage in the Wilderneſs, ſhall find it to be chequer'd with Provocations and Judgments; and altho they melted in the Furnace, yet they return'd to their former Temper when the heat was over, and became more hard and impenetrable by being wrought in the Fire. Nay, when they were reduc'd to that ſtate of Government, under which they were likeſt

lieſt to ſubſiſt, as being at the greateſt diſtance from Diviſibility, I mean a Monarchy; yet then, I ſay, when in the moſt flouriſhing ſtate, and in the moſt hopeful way to obtain ſtability, we find them at the ſame time turning Apoſtates from God, and Rebels to their Prince.

To proceed then; when of all the Tribes, ſcarce the tenth part (which in all things elſe was conſecrated to God) became Followers of the True Religion: 'twas not long before that began to revolt, and to turn away from the Truth: For 'tis recorded of the days of *Rehoboam*, that *Judah* did Evil in the ſight of the Lord, and that they provok'd him to Jealouſie, with the ſins they had committed above all that their Fore-fathers had done: For they alſo built them High-Places, Groves and Images on every high Hill, and under every green Tree; there was not a Mountain but had Altars on it, and thoſe Altars almoſt as many and various as the Stars of Heaven, to whoſe Worſhip they were erected. How often did God ſend to them by his Prophets, by his Judgments, and by his Mercies; but all in vain; neither the one nor the other could perfect their Recovery; and what was yet worſe, inſtead of turning to their God, we find them flying

flying to the *Aſſyrians*, to that Idolatrous People to be heal'd and cur'd of their Wounds; like the dying Hart, which went to the Covert for ſhelter, from whence came the mortal Arrow. Nor did this Contagion overſpread the People only, but many times their Kings, and ſometimes their Prieſts were infected with the Leproſie; all which Diſorders at laſt found an end in the Ruin of their Temple, Sanctuary, and City, together with the loſs of their Ark, and of all other Sacred Relicks and Monuments, whatſoever; all their Princes, Prieſts and men of Note, being loaded with Irons, and carried away like Slaves into dreadful Bondage and Captivity. Nay, after they were miraculouſly reſtor'd in the beginning of *Cyrus* his Reign, we find them expoſed to great Difficulties, and engag'd with Potent Enemies in their reſettlement; which indeed was rather a new kind of Combat than a Reſtauration; for it was Fourſcore years and better before the Temple and Walls of the City were repair'd; and not long after 'twas, that they were aſſaulted by dire Perſecutions, under the *Greeks*, who liv'd in *Syria*, as appears in the Acts and Records of the *Machabees*: After which time they fell into divers Factions and Diſorders, even

to

to the Birth of Jesus, after which shortly follow'd their final Extirpation.

Now let us put all this together, and then let us make a Judgment of the whole. The Jews we see were a handful of People, separated from all the World by Language, Rites, and manner of Life: They were generally of heavy Capacities, obstinate and most prone to Idolatry, their Kings also and Rulers being most of them Vicious and Idolaters; in Times of Peace easily drawn away to follow the Superstition of their Neighbours, and at length broken to pieces by a miserable Captivity; and even the scatter'd Fragments of their Nation batter'd by a continual series of Calamities, and irrepairable Disorders. And yet notwithstanding all these disadvantages, we find their Religion to have been miraculously preserv'd for the space of Fifteen hundred years: For the Law of *Moses* was never abolish'd, nor any new Rites introduc'd by the solemn Decrees of the *Sanhedrim*; so that there was still the Face of a Church, and Men rais'd up in an extraordinary manner to support the same by their exemplary Lives and seasonable Instructions; all which could not be but by the singular and special Power of Almighty God, when for so long a Tract of

Time all human Means univerſally conſpir'd to the utter Ruin and Extirpation of it.

CHAP. XV.

Of the Authority of the Old Teſtament.

THE Divine Authority of the Books of the Old Teſtament, in which the Jewiſh Hiſtory and Religion is contain'd, may be demonſtrated firſt from the Matter and Manner of their writing; next from Records of human Antiquity. And Firſt, The Old Teſtament has ſingular Advantages above any other Works and Writings whatſoever, in reſpect of its Antiquity: It begins with the Creation of the World, with a ſhort account of the Antidiluvian Times, down to the general Deluge; after which time it ſhews the Re-ſettlement of Mankind; as alſo what Nations were of greateſt Antiquity, and then comes more particularly to the Anceſtors of the Jewiſh, and deſcribes the plainneſs of the firſt Ages in the Lives and Manners of their Patriarchs: From thence it deſcends gradually to the Time of the Jews ſettling in *Egypt*

Egypt in many delectable Paſſages, with ſome account alſo of the Neighbouring Nations. During their abode in *Egypt* we have little Account, till ſuch time as *Moſes* appear'd, to whom the Law was given. From *Moſes* downwards we have a more large and accurate Hiſtory, diſtinguiſh'd by ſeveral Succeſſions of Judges and Kings; and the years they govern'd reduc'd to certain Periods of Time, even to the *Babyloniſh* Captivity; we have a particular Hiſtory alſo of their Re-ſettlement; and after ſome intermiſſion, we have an Account of their Actions under the Government of their High-Prieſts, during their Wars with the *Greeks*. Not long after which Time followed the Birth of the Meſſiah. In ſhort, the Acts and Monuments of the Old Teſtament are of that Antiquity, that even the firſt Hiſtorians amongſt the *Greeks*, as *Herodotus* and *Thucydides* flouriſh'd but about the time of *Eſdras*, who was one of the laſt amongſt the Jewiſh Writers.

In the next Place, theſe Sacred Books have a ſingular Advantage above all other Writings whatſoever, whether we conſider the great variety of Matter contain'd in them, or the Stile in which they are writ. The Stile is for the moſt part very

plain and obvious to all Capacities (as Books of this kind ought to be) but withal it ſpeaks with that Gravity and Authority, as becomes Divine Oracles, not inſinuating its Precepts by Rhetorical Arts, but enjoyning them by a kind of Majeſty and ſevere Commands; and yet we have ſome Deſcriptions (eſpecially amongſt the Prophets) made with that livelineſs of Repreſentation and grandeur of Expreſſion, as far exceeds the Raptures of our Modern Poets, or thoſe of former Ages. What Strains of Wit can draw ſuch an Idea of a Glorious Combatant as that we meet with in *Iſaiah* cap. 63. in the Deſcription he gives us of our Saviour's Bloody, but Victorious Conflict upon the Croſs. *Who is he that cometh from Edom, with died garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatneſs of his ſtrength?* (Anſw.) *I that ſpeak in righteouſneſs, mighty to ſave.* (Queſt.) *Wherefore art thou red in thy apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the Wine-preſs?* (Anſw.) *I have troden the Wine-preſs alone, and of the people there was none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury, and their blood ſhall be ſprinkled upon my garments, and I will ſtain all my raiment.*

ment. And I looked, and there was none to help; and I wondred that there was none to uphold: therefore mine own arm brought ſalvation unto me, and my fury it upheld me. And I will tread down the people in mine anger, and make them drunk in my fury, and I will bring down their ſtrength to the earth. Can there be form'd a nobler Image of a Conqueror, dapled with Blood, wreeking with Revenge, and panting and beſtriding his proſtrate Enemy in the ſight of two Armies? How far ſhort of this is *Æneas*'s Character in his Combat with *Turnus*, deſcrib'd by *Virgil*? So that *Angelus Politianus* ſhew'd a ſingular delicacy, or rather a critical weakneſs, in neglecting to read theſe Sacred Compoſitions, for fear of debaſing his Stile; whereas *Marſilius*, *Ficinus*, and *John Picus Mirandula*, Men of greater Parts and Learning, delighted in nothing more than in the ſtudy of them.

If we conſider the variety of Matter treated of in theſe Sacred Writings, there is no Collection under Heaven can compare with them; what excellent Obſervations and Inſtructions have we for Morality in the Books of *Eccleſiaſticus*; which without an Hyperbole, may be ſaid to be the beſt in that kind in the whole world, as reaching to all the Cir-

cumſtances of Life. The Books of *Solomon* muſt tell a Heathen, that he was a Man of vaſt Knowledge: His *Canticles* ſhew him to have been a Man of a moſt pregnant Fancy: His *Eccleſiaſtes* ſeems to have been a Diſcourſe by way of Dialogue betwixt Wiſdom and a Senſual Nature: But his *Proverbs* do declare him to have been both Good and Wiſe, and were writ probably before he was Corrupted. The Books of the Prophets ſhew that they were writ by Men of intrepid Reſolutions: They reprove without Flattery, and touch the Affections to the quick, breathing always an Ardent Zeal for Vertue, and for the Glory of Almighty God. And as for the Book of the *Pſalms* they are a kind of Poem, and they muſt be confeſs'd of all Hands to flow from an inexhauſtible Fountain of Piety and Devotion, and teach us how we may Addreſs our ſelves to God under the ſeveral Forms of Confeſſion, Petition, Supplication, Thankſgiving, Vows and Praiſes: And truly, had *David* been inſpir'd with a Human Spirit, he would have employ'd his Poetick Fancy in illuſtrating ſome Paſſages of his own Life, *viz.* His Fights and Victories as a Warriour, and particularly his Engagement with *Goliah*, would have afforded

forded noble Matter for an Heroick Poem; or elſe as a Courtier he would have Compos'd ſome ſoft Paſtoral or Madrigal, containing his Amours with *Bathſheba*; or as a Friend, he would have exercis'd his Fancy about his more Innocent Love and Affection for *Jonathan*. But we find nothing of this Nature; his Subject always is Divine, one while as a Suppliant or Penitent, another while as an humble Petitioner; anon with Strains of Gratitude, and in Heavenly Raptures, he addreſſes himſelf to his Creator, and Celebrates the Praiſes of Almighty God, by recounting his Wonders and Mercies, his Comforts and many Deliverances; all which cannot but ſhew, that they were dictated by another Spirit, and kindled by a purer Fire, than what commonly ſparkles in the gay Fancies and Inventions of Men. As for the Hiſtorical Books of the Old Teſtament, we have touch'd upon them already; and we may ſay of the whole Book or Collection of theſe Sacred Writings, that 'tis like the Manna it ſpeaks of; it is Food to every Palate, ſuch as does not nauſeate, but has a relliſhing Taſte of every thing, and creates an Appetite: And 'tis worth our Obſervation, that let a Man read theſe Holy Writings with all

attention imaginable, yet when he comes to read them again, he ſhall diſcover ſome things of which he was ignorant before, though he repeat the Section of them to the very end of his Life; which ſhews that tis a Spring which is inexhauſtible, and that the more we drink of theſe Waters, the more we thirſt; from whence it is, that the Wiſeſt and moſt Learned Men have addicted themſelves moſt to the reading of theſe Books, the nearer they drew towards their End, which ſhews alſo, that 'tis their Nature to lead Men forwards towards a State of further Perfection.

Another thing which ſhews theſe Books to be of Divine Inſpiration, is the manner of their writing. Turn over all human Hiſtories whatſoever, and we ſhall ſtill find it to have been their grand Scope and Deſign, to magnifie their own Nation, and to repreſent their Actions with all advantageous Characters imaginable, to applaud their own Cuſtoms and Manners, and to avouch the Juſtice of their Dealings: But 'tis otherwiſe in theſe Sacred Writings; the Pen-Men of them are in nothing more copious, than in ſhewing the Blemiſhes of their own Nation, their Apoſtacies, their Idolatrous Diſpoſitions, together with the notorious

ous and ſcandalous Lapſes and Relapſes of their Kings, though held in never ſo great eſteem for Power and Goodneſs: And this certainly is an Invincible Argument, that they did not in their Reports proceed upon Natural and Human Conſiderations, but as it was dictated to them by a higher and more noble Impulſe, and contrary to the Genius and Temper of that Nation, who in reality were as Vain, Self-admiring, and Unconſtant as any other People upon the Face of the Earth. 'Tis beyond my Power to anſwer ſuch Difficulties as occur in the Old Teſtament, touching the Jewiſh Genealogies and Chronologies, together with ſome Cuſtoms and Paſſages, as ſeem ſtrange to us of this Age, ſince we find the like, and greater, in the Writings of all prophane Authors, though never ſo well digeſted; or perhaps God Almighty might on purpoſe ſuffer ſome Paſſages to be obſcure and ſeemingly Repugnant to our Underſtandings, the better to ſubjugate our Reaſon to Faith, which is a more excellent degree of aſſent, becauſe it reſolves it ſelf into the abſolute Authority and Veracity of the Proponent without heſitance, or any dependance upon our own feeble Notions.

In

In the laſt Place, the Divine Authority of theſe Sacred Writings is legible in the Acts and Monuments even of Human Antiquity; ſo that the moſt polite Writers amongſt the Ancients, did light their Candles from this Sacred and ever burning Lamp. *Virgil* and *Ovid* borrowed out of *Geneſis*, their Hiſtory of the Worlds Creation, which they improv'd, or rather debas'd by their Poetick Fictions. *Iapetus* the Father of *Prometheus*, and by whom the World was Re-peopled after the Flood, was no other but *Japhet*, whom the Poets feign'd to be the Son of *Cœlum* and *Terra*; that is, to have had his Extraction from God. The *Ogygian* and *Deucalion* Floods were Poetick Fictions deriv'd from *Noah*'s Deluge. *Plutarch* makes mention too of a Doves being ſent out of an Ark by *Deucalion*, to diſcover the Abatement of the Waters. The Giants climbing up to Heaven, was taken from the building of *Babel*: we find alſo whatſoever occurs in the Fragments of Prophane Writers of greateſt Antiquity, to ſquare with the Accounts we meet with in the Jewiſh Monuments. The *Egyptians* and *Chaldeans* were ever held amongſt prophane Authors, to have been the moſt Ancient of Nations; and we find the ſame in Scripture alſo. The

Plutarch. lib. quod Bruta ratione utuntur.

Hiſtory

Hiſtory of the burning of *Sodom* has left indelible Marks of its verity in the Bituminous Waters, and noiſom ſmells of the Lake adjoining, which is ſo ſtinking and poiſonous, that nothing can live in it, as appears even at this very day; as alſo in the Fruits which grow near that accurſed Place, which though moſt beautiful to the Eye, are eaſily crumbled to Duſt and Aſhes, as *Morney du Pleſſis* (*a*) proves out of *Galen*, *Strabo*, *Solinus*, and others: The ſame thing is affirm'd alſo by *Tacitus*. The departure of the Children of *Iſrael* out of *Egypt*, under the Conduct of *Moſes*, with many other Paſſages of the Old Teſtament, are mention'd by (*b*) *Juſtin*, as alſo by (*c*) *Tacitus*, though with ſome depravation. The ſimplicity and plain Paſtoral Life, together with the Habits of the Patriarchs are much the ſame which we meet with in *Homer*, (who liv'd a little after the time of *David*) in his Deſcriptions of the Age and Men of which he wrote; and even the Feaſts of the Gods conſiſted of no other Dainties than Bread and Wine. The Temple of *Solomon* was ſo famous throughout the World, that it gave the denomination to the City it ſelf, which is called *Hieroſolyma*, *quaſi Hieron Solomonis*, or the Temple of *Solomon*. And even

(*a*) Morn. cap. 26. de Verit. Rel.

(*b*) *Juſtin.* lib. 36.

(*c*) Lib. 5. Hiſt.

even at this very day, the great Emperor of the *Abyſſines*, or of *Ethiopia*, (called *Preſter John*) with all the Natives of that vaſt Country (though Chriſtians) ſtill retain Circumciſion, not as brought thither by the Eunuch, who was Baptiz'd by St. *Philip*, but in Memory of their deſcent from the Queen of *Sheba*, whom *Solomon* treated not only at his Table, but at his Bed alſo; ſo that amongſt other proud Titles of that Emperour, he glories moſt in ſtiling himſelf the Son of *Solomon* and of *David*.

The Memory of the Ten Tribes, who were at ſeveral times carried away Captives by *Teylath*, *Phalaſtor*, and *Salmanaſtor*, into the Deſart and Northern Parts of *Media*, is preſerv'd to this very day in the *Tartars*, who ('tis certain) are deſcended from the Jews, who were diſpers'd by the *Medes* their Conquerors; for the *Colchians*, who were the Progenitors of the *Tartars*, as *Herodotus* tells us, were Circumcis'd, tho' the Name of *Tartar* was not conſiderable, nor known till about the year of our Lord 1200. at ſuch time as *Civigi* their Captain began to over-run the World with his Barbarous Multitudes. However ſo it was that they ſtill retain'd Circumciſion even long before they ever heard of *Mahomet*, and upon that account

Herod. lib. 2.

count they embrac'd his Doctrine with leſs difficulty, as agreeing with them in that Cuſtom. All which is further yet Confirm'd, for as much as the Name of *Tartar*, or *Totar* (as ſome report) does in the *Syriack* Tongue ſignifie [*derelict*,] from whence it comes alſo; that there is at this day ſuch a great Number of Jews in *Ruſſia*, *Salmatia* and *Lithuania*. To conclude this Point, whoſoever ſhall ſurvey Matters impartially, cannot but obſerve that *Orpheus*, *Muſæus*, *Pythagoras*, *Plato*, and the reſt of the Ancient Worthies, Copied their Divinity from the Jewiſh Reports; ſince we read full, that they went into *Egypt* for their improvement in Knowledge, where the Acts of *Moſes*, as they were of laſting Remembrance, ſo the *Iſraelites* too were their neareſt Neighbours, and who for many Exigencies had a conſtant Correſpondence with that Nation.

The Third general Argument to prove the Authority of the Old Teſtament, as alſo the Truth of the Jewiſh Religion, is drawn from the certainty of its Predictions: For Inſtance, *Jacob* upon his Death bed, *Gen.* 48. in Bleſſing *Joſeph*'s two Sons, contrary to the order of their Birth-right; and as they were preſented to him by *Joſeph*, croſſing his Arms, lays his

his Right-hand upon the Head of *Ephraim* the younger Brother, and gives him the Preeminence in his Bleſſings: Nor did he do this by chance, but by aſſiſted and ſteddy direction; for though he was decrepid and his Eyes dim, yet had he a clear foreſight of what was to come to paſs Six or Seven hundred years after his death, Propheſying the future Greatneſs of *Ephraim*, which we find verified upon the Revolt of the Ten Tribes, of which *Ephraim* was the Head; for *Jeroboam* their firſt King was of the Tribe of *Ephraim*, as alſo many of thoſe Kings who ſucceeded him, and *Samaria* the Metropolis, in which the Kings of *Iſrael* reſided did belong alſo to *Ephraim*. To this we might add ſome other Predictions of like certainty, which for as much as they reſpect the prefixt Duration or Period of the Jewiſh Government and Religion, come more properly to be conſider'd of in the following Chapter.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVI.

The Jewiſh *Religion to have its Period upon the coming of the Meſſiah.*

WE have in ſome meaſure ſeen already of what Authority the Jewiſh Religion was, the juſt extent whereof will yet further appear, if we have regard a little to the Scope and End to which it was directed, *viz.* The Birth of the great Meſſiah, even Jeſus Chriſt the Saviour of the World; and for this purpoſe let us a little conſider the Nature of thoſe Rites and Inſtitutions, of which the Jewiſh Religion did conſiſt. Their Circumciſion, Aſperſions, and other Luſtrations, could in themſelves have no Virtue to expiate Sins, and purifie the Souls of Men; if ſo, Sanctity might have been purchas'd at an eaſie rate. That vaſt Number of Offerings and Sacrifices ſmoaking always before the Temple, could hold no proportion with the State of Men, or with the Nature of God, who being a pure Spirit, and merciful towards all his Creatures, could not be delighted with the Blood of ſo many harmleſs Animals, no more than the ſame Blood

Blood could cleanſe anothers Infirmities; and ſuch as were of a Spiritual Nature, indeed naturally they muſt ſeem to encreaſe the Stain, and to make the Guilt to be of a deeper Tincture.

And for this purpoſe, let us imagine our ſelves to have been preſent at ſome of thoſe Solemnities. What Entertainment can our Ears meet with in the doleful Bellowings of ſo many Beaſts of all kinds, then ready to be murder'd? What Spectacle of Horrour muſt it needs have been for our Eyes to behold ſuch a Prodigious Number of *Levites* truſs'd up to do Execution, wreeking their Hands in the Bowels of Beaſts, with their Knives dropping Blood, and their Frocks beſpatter'd with Gore, and polluted with Duſt, Sweat, and ſuch like Ordure as muſt attend ſuch a general Butchery? What Nidour muſt it be which muſt affect our Senſe of Smelling from the broyling of ſo much Fleſh on the Coals, and from the Steams and Fumes ariſing from an infinite Number of Pots and Spits, of Caldrons and Frying-Pans? inſomuch that all the Stalls, Shops and Chambers of the *Piazza*, and the adjoyning Buildings of the Temple (which muſt needs have been exceeding many) ſeem'd nothing but one monſtrous

Theater

Theater of Blood, Shambles and Sculleries. To all which Heats arising from such a vast Number of Fires, let us add those of the scorching Climate, especially in the Summer, which was the Season appointed for these Solemnities, together with the Inconveniencies and Distempers, which must needs follow such an Immense Throng of People, and we may easily imagine, that they were almost poison'd in all their Senses, and that the noysomness of the Offerings was as great as that of the Sins which occasion'd them, and that such a mixture and medly of things, so Displeasing, Painful and Unnatural, was sufficient to render all, both Actors and Spectators, but one great and dreadful Sacrifice.

All these Circumstances could not but affect such as were Piously dispos'd, with a detestation of their own sinful Natures, for whose sake they were Instituted; but much greater must their Horrour have been when once they apprehended, that all these Bloody Performances, were only as so many Types of that one Real and Tremendous Sacrifice, which was to be accomplish'd in the dolorous Agony and Death of the Great and Innocent *Messiah*, God and Man, in his most opprobrious and painful Sufferings upon the

Croſs. Doubtleſs God Almighty had reveal'd ſomething of this Nature, to ſome of the more devout and knowing Jews, though the Generality look'd no further than the viſible and external Rites, which could in no meaſure purge away Sin, but in Virtue of that Immaculate and Supernatural Victim, which was to endure for all Ages, and of which the Lamb of the Paſſover was a pregnant Symbol, as we ſhall ſee hereafter. No, no, theſe Sacrifices in themſelves could have no purging nor atoning Virtue, nor could they in their own Natures be acceptable to God: *For thou delighteſt not in Sacrifice*, ſays *David*, Pſal. 51. *elſe would I give it thee; thou delighteſt not in Burnt Offerings. The Sacrifices of God are a wounded ſpirit, a broken and a contrite heart.* And upon this account it was, that Obedience was better than Sacrifice; and that we read ſo often of the Sacrifice of Righteouſneſs, Praiſe and Thankſgiving: Hence it was alſo, that the Circumciſion of Lips and Heart, that is, a purity of our Works, Thoughts and Affections, are ſo often preſs'd in Scripture. The Blood of Bulls and Goats could never take away Sins, nor could their Sacrifices perfect the comers to them, for as much as they were only Shadows of good things to come:

Hebr. 10

come: all which, and many more Obſervations of this Nature are preſs'd at large by St. *Paul* againſt the Bigots of the *Jewiſh* Laws; ſhewing alſo the true and legal Ceſſation of them upon the coming of Chriſt: which thing alſo was actually accompliſh'd, as appears by the State and Circumſtances of the *Jewiſh* Nation to this very day.

From the *Jewiſh* Rites and Sacrifices, let us proceed to their Predictions: the firſt ſhall be that of the Patriarch *Jacob* in the Benediction of his Sons; where ſpeaking of *Judah*, he ſays, *The Scepter ſhall not depart from* Judah, *nor a Law-giver from between his Feet, until* Shiloh *come; and unto him ſhall the gathering of the Nations be*, &c. For the better underſtanding of which Paſſage we are to note, that *Shiloh* was a Mountain where the Ark of the Tabernacle was kept, and where the Children of *Iſrael* for a long time went up to worſhip before the Temple was built: and *Shiloh* in this Senſe may ſignifie the Worſhip of God; tho the Grammatical ſignification of the Word is (*who ſhall be ſent*) and then the Senſe is this, *The Scepter ſhall not depart from* Judah, *until he come who ſhall be ſent*; which even the *Jews* themſelves underſtand of the *Meſſiah*. In this Prediction

Gen. 49.

Vide Mornay du Pleſſis, cap. 29. de Veritat. Relig. Chriſt.

'tis plain, that *Jacob* was guided by the Spirit of God: For by the Courſe of Nature, *Reuben*, *Simeon*, and *Levi* were before *Judah*. This Prediction alſo was made by *Jacob* 600. years before the Regal Power fell into the Tribe of *Judah*, where it continued till the Captivity and afterwards: For *Zorobabel*, under whoſe Government the *Jews* were reſtor'd, was of the Lineage of *David*: But after it fell out, that the Regal Family, and the Prieſthood were united by Marriage, for want of Heirs Male in ſome one of the ruling Princes, the Government laps'd into the Family of the High Prieſt, in right of their Wives: for by a particular Privilege or Cuſtom, the Royal and the Levitical Tribes married frequently into one anothers Families, as appears by *Jewiſh* Records: And hence it was that the *Maccabees*, or *Aſſamonean* Family, who held the Prieſthood by Paternal deſcent, held alſo the Civil Power by a Maternal Right; both which Powers were ſtill united in one Perſon, till the time of *Herod*, the Son of *Antipater*, who being an Alien, or Native of *Idumæa*, by the Power of the *Romans* obtained the Government; and the better to ſtrengthen his Intereſt in the *Jews*, he became a Proſelyte, and married *Mariamne*, the Daughter

Vide Earon. Apparat. p 4.

Daughter of *Hircanus* (then a Priſoner in *Parthia*, and the laſt Prince of the Race of the *Maccabees*;) whom he afterward murder'd, together with his Wife and the Children he had by her, out of jealouſie, leaſt the *Jews* ſhould reſtore ſome one or other of that Race to the Kingdom of their Anceſtors. He murdered alſo all the Illuſtrious Perſons of the Tribe of *Judah*, he burnt their Genealogies and Archives, and he kill'd their ſeventy Senators, or Judges, which made the Sanhedrim, ſubſtituting ſtrangers in their place, and by theſe violent Proceedings put a period to the *Jewiſh* Government, even as it was foretold ſix hundred Years before by *Jacob*: For in his Reign it was that Jeſus, the Meſſiah or Chriſt, was born: And not long after the death of *Herod*, the *Jewiſh* Nation was govern'd by Proconſuls, and ſoon after alſo, their City, Temple, and Nation was utterly demoliſh'd by *Titus*. Now that Jeſus was the promiſed Meſſiah, ſhall be prov'd at large in the following Chapters: Nor can the *Jews* ſhew another Meſſiah, or Saviour, from the time their Government had its period to this very day; much leſs ſuch a one to whom the Nations were gather'd, as they were to Jeſus.

Monſaut. in Apparat.

Others there are, who by the Scepter ſpoken of by *Jacob*, do not underſtand the *Davidical* Monarchy; for this they ſay ended in *Zedekiah*'s Captivity: And as for *Zorobabel*, tho he was of the Line of *David*, yet his Power was not Regal and Hereditary, but rather Conſulary and Aſcititious; as being of chiefeſt note amongſt thoſe who return'd, and was a Favourite alſo of *Darius*. After *Zorobabel*, we read of *Eſdras* and *Nehemias*, that they exercis'd the chiefeſt Authority in the *Jewiſh* Government, tho it does not appear that they were any way related to *Zorobabel* by Blood or Affinity. As for the *Aſſamonean* Family, who govern'd as Princes and High Prieſts, that they were of the Lineage of *David* by the Mothers ſide, is aſſerted *gratis*, but not prov'd. By the Scepter then, they underſtand only the Political State of the *Jews*, which in ſome Form of Government or other, was to continue till the coming of the Meſſiah, and might be ſaid to be in *Judah*, foraſmuch as the greateſt part of the *Jews* were of that Tribe and Territory. But which way ſoever we interpret the Prophecy, we find it to have been accompliſh'd about the time of our Saviour's Birth; or at ſuch time as *Herod* invaded the Govern-

ment,

ment, and extinguiſh'd all *Jewiſh* Rites whatſoever, as hath been before obſerved.

The next famous Prediction is that of *Daniel*, *chap.* 9. The Words are theſe: *Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people, and upon thy holy City, to finiſh the Tranſgreſſion, and to make an end of Sins, and to make Reconciliation for Iniquity, and to bring in everlaſting Righteouſneſs, and to Seal up the Viſion and Prophecy, and to anoint the moſt Holy: Know therefore and underſtand, that from the going forth of the Commandment, to reſtore and build Jeruſalem unto the Meſſiah the Prince, ſhall be ſeven Weeks, and threeſcore and two Weeks, the Streets ſhall be built again, and the Wall, even in troublous times: And after threeſcore and two Weeks ſhall Meſſiah be cut off; but not for himſelf: and the people of the Prince that ſhall come, ſhall deſtroy the City and the Sanctuary; and the end thereof ſhall be with a Flood.* There are two Paſſages in this famous Viſion which require a little explication: The firſt is the Word *Week*, or *Hebdomas*, which Grammatically ſignifies a Septenary Number, and is commonly taken for a Week, or Septenary of days; but ſometimes too for a Septenary, or Week of Years, as is obvious amongſt the *Hebrews*, and par-

ticularly *Leviticus* 25. we have an Account not only of a Septenary, or Sabbath of Weeks, [where on the Seventh Week; that is, on the Seventh Year, called (*Sabbaticus*) they were not to plough nor ſow, *&c.*] but we have an Account of ſeven Sabbaths, or ſeven Weeks of Years; which made in all Forty nine Years, and then begun their Jubilee, *viz.* on the Fiftieth Year, wherein Liberty was proclaimed to the Captive, and every man was to be reſtored to his Poſſeſſion, and to return to his Family: in which Year alſo they were neither to ſow nor reap, *&c*, In like manner *Gen.* 29. we read of *Jacob*, that he could not obtain *Rachel* for his Wife, till ſuch time as he had fulfilled her Week; that is, his ſeven Years Service for her, as it is there expreſs'd at large. In like manner this Paſſage of *Daniel* muſt be underſtood by weeks of Years, as is agreed upon by all Expoſitors; ſince infinite Abſurdities and Falſities would follow, ſhould we interpret the Prophecy by weeks of Days: For *Jeruſalem* was not built in ſeven Weeks, nor in many Years after the return of the *Jews*: Nor was there any Meſſiah who appeared and was put to death, after the ſpace of a Year and ſome Months; much leſs was the

the Temple profan'd in ſo ſhort a time; nor were there any ſuch Deſolations and Abominations as are there ſpoken of.

The next Queſtion is, from what time we are to begin our Account. We muſt underſtand therefore that there were ſeveral Decrees made by the *Perſian* Kings in favour of the *Jews*; of which Two were more ſignal. The firſt was that of *Cyrus* in the firſt Year of his Reign, recorded by *Ezra*, *chap.* 1. and this Decree was for the rebuilding the Temple. The other Decree is that which *Nehemiah* ſpeaks of in the Twentieth Year of *Artaxerxes Longimanus*, call'd in Scripture [*Ahaſuerus*] for the rebuilding the City and Walls of *Jeruſalem*. This Decree of *Artaxerxes* was in the Year of the World 3529. to which if we add ſeven Weeks of Years, or Forty nine Years to be allow'd for the rebuilding of *Jeruſalem*, and ſixty two weeks of Years, we ſhall find the number of Four hundred eighty three Years, and then the total Sum of Years will be 4012, which falls out within four or five Years that Chriſt the Meſſiah was crucified; and in Computations of this Nature it can hardly be imagin'd that any Chronologiſt tho never ſo accurate, ſhould be able to reduce Tranſactions to a certain number of Years by a Mathematical

matical Exactneſs. However, we find the accompliſhment of this Prediction touching the Meſſiah's death, to have hapned ſomewhat above the middle of *Tiberius* his Reign; at which time 'twas that Chriſt was crucified. And as to the Abomination and perpetual Deſolation of the Temple and *Jewiſh* Religion, which was ſhortly after to follow by a Prince of the People that was to come; all this was accompliſh'd by *Titus*, Emperor of the *Romans*, who in the time of this Prophecy were a People very inconſiderable, and unknown to the *Perſians* for ſome Ages after. And as for the Authority and Credit of this Prophecy, there is no place for Atheiſm to ſcruple at: For it was regiſtred among the Canonical Books, in that Tranſlation of the *Septuagint* made by the Order of *Ptolomeus Philadelphus*, almoſt Three hundred Years before its Accompliſhment.

The laſt ſignal Token of the Diſſolution of the *Jewiſh* Nation and Religion, is collected from that Paſſage in the 23*d* of *Exodus*, where we read, that God had appointed all the Males to appear at *Jeruſalem* thrice in the Year, *viz.* on the Feaſt of Unleavened Bread, at the Feaſt of Weeks, or Firſt-fruits, and at the Feaſt of Tabernacles, or gathering of the Harveſt:

veſt: Each of which Feaſts laſted ſeven days; during all which time of abſence, God promiſed, that their Lands and Houſes ſhould not be moleſted and ſpoil'd by their Neighbouring Nations: which in truth was a continual Miracle: For during the ſpace of ſo many Hundred Years, we do not find they were ever injur'd by their Enemies, who doubtleſs would never have ſlipt ſo many advantages, had they not in a miraculous manner been withheld by God. But when the time prefixt to their Government was once expir'd, then 'twas that God ſuffered the *Romans* under *Titus* to beſiege *Jeruſalem* in the time of the Paſſover, that there might be a more Univerſal and inevitable Deſtruction; which like a mighty Flood (as it was foretold) ſwept them all away; for after that time they were abandon'd by God to utter Ruin and Miſery.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVII.

Of the State of the Jews *ſince their Fall.*

AND here it will not be unprofitable, how unpleaſant ſoever it may be, to fix our Thoughts a little upon this black and gloomy Scene, by conſidering the Severity and Righteouſneſs of God's Judgments upon this forlorn and miſerable Nation, who are now as diſcernible from all mankind beſides, by a perpetual Stream or Inundation rather of Calamities, as they were once by a continual Series of Deliverances and Mercies. Scarce had Thirty five Years paſt from the murder of the Righteous Jeſus, when *Titus*, by the command of his Father, inveſts *Jeruſalem* on the very day of the Paſſover, which fell out to be the 22*d* of *April*, by all Lunary Computation; tho *Joſephus* makes it to have been on the 16*th* of *April*. The City with all its Fortreſſes was not taken till the 7*th* of *September* following: during which time of the Siege, there dyed by Famine and other Diſeaſes 715080. beſides a vaſt number which fled daily, or were turn'd out of the

Lib. 6. Bel. Jud. c. 4.

the Gates to eaſe the beſieged: all which were tortured and crucified in ſight of their Walls. The Number of Priſoſoners amounted to 97000. and thoſe who dyed by the Sword, Famine, *&c.* were in the whole 1100000. A thing which to us may ſeem incredible, how ſo much Proviſion could be found for the maintenance of ſo many Souls; unleſs it were, that they had laid in greater Stores than what was uſual for the Occaſions of the Feaſt, upon a Proſpect of the Deſign of *Titus*, and that they rather confided to their Walls than to the open Campaign, upon an Erroneous Belief poſſibly, that God would never ſuffer them to be demoliſh'd a ſecond time: However it was, the Miſeries they endur'd muſt be without Parallel, conſidering the vaſt Multitudes which were crowded up together, and the long continuance of a ſcorching Seaſon; which (beſides the ſlaughter made on them by the Enemy,) did direly afflict them by Peſtilence and Famine.

In ſhort; their City and Temple, and all Records of their Nation were reduc'd to Aſhes: Their Prieſts and Rulers utterly deſtroy'd, and thoſe few that remain'd were loaded with Opprobry and Miſery; ſcatter'd hither and thither, and never ſuffer'd

ſuffer'd to return to their Native Country to this very day. And if at any time in after Ages they grew into a Body, they were preſently maſſacred as an Execrable Race, and unfit to live upon the Earth. From that time to this, they have had neither Temple, Sacrifice, nor Prieſts; and let the Jews lye as they pleaſe, 'tis certain, that all Proofs of their Deſcents and Tribes are loſt; all Monuments and Records of their Genealogies periſh'd in the Flames, they themſelves being ſtill toſs'd about the World, expos'd to perpetual Wants and Fears, and not in the leaſt addicted to Learning, and to preſerve the Memory of their Misfortunes by writing of Hiſtories; or if they were, is it poſſible, being ſo divided and ſcatter'd, as they are, and rowling from Place to Place, that they ſhould give any account of their Lineage or paſt Tranſactions? ſo that we of this Age might with far greater eaſe pretend to tell of what Family and Profeſſion every Man's Anceſtors were of Twelve or thirteen hundred years ago; which if any living dares venture to do I am much miſtaken: much more impoſſible then muſt this be, for ſo many individual Perſons, and in ſuch Circumſtances as thoſe the Jews lie under, to give a Hiſtory or Account

count of their Families and Pedigree; who though they be blown and ſcatter'd into all Corners of the Earth, yet have they no footing in it, having no City of their own, no Magiſtrates nor Judicature: Nor are they ſuffer'd to purchaſe a yard of Land any where amongſt the Chriſtians. And as for what's reported of their inhabiting ſome Mountains of *Arabia*, or elſewhere, under a Civil Government of their own, it is without colour of Truth, and utterly inconſiſtent with the Turkiſh Maxims. And as they have no Propriety in the Earth, ſo have they but a precarious Right even to the Waters; for whatſoever Traffick they drive at Sea, they are not ſuffer'd to have a Ship of their own, but are forc'd to venture all in Chriſtian or Turkiſh Bottoms, and under the covert of Merchants their profeſt Enemies, for fear of Repriſals and Forfeitures. Their Neceſſities make them induſtrious and ſubtil, and have taught them all the Arts of ſhifting and cheating, which renders them moſt odious: And even thoſe States who admit of them, do it out of Policy, placing them many times over their Gabels and Cuſtoms, as the fitteſt Inſtruments of Exaction, and who know all the ſordid and deteſtable ways of Confiſcations,

fiſcations, and of ſcrewing the Strings to the height. Where they are permitted to live publickly, though their Converſion be pretended, 'tis nothing leſs: For if a Jew become a Chriſtian, his Goods are forfeited, upon pretence of being got by Uſury and unjuſt Practices; verily a notable Argument to perſwade them to become Chriſtians: 'Tis ſuch a piece of Policy certainly as cannot conſiſt with the Maxims of true Chriſtianity, no more than it can conſiſt with Prudence and Honeſty, to ſuffer them to oppreſs the People amongſt whom they live, by their many Cheats, and by their intolerable Uſuries and Brokeage, whilſt they pay perhaps ſome ſhare of their Ill-gotten Wealth to the Government in a way of Compoſition, for their Permiſſion and Privileges; ſo that in effect, they are us'd only as Spunges to ſuck the Radical Moiſture of the People, which may be ſqueez'd out of them again at Pleaſure; in which Caſe 'tis hard to judge whether are the greater Jews, they or ſuch Chriſtians. And yet for all this, they are held in the ſame diſtruſt with Thieves and Murderers, being lockt and chain'd up every night within their naſty Quarters.

Such

Such ſevere uſage cannot but fill them with diſmal Reſentments; and hence it is, that they are the greateſt Maſters in the Helliſh Arts of Poiſoning, and the moſt refin'd Inſtruments of ſecret Murders and Treachery, and prone to all manner of Villainy. Notwithſtanding that their Religion does require them to abſtain from Blood, it would be both their Meat and Drink too, had they the Power in their hands. Notwithſtanding their Religion does for the moſt part conſiſt in Forms of Purifying, in cleanneſs of Apparel, in frequent Waſhings, and abſtaining from all Pollutions of Meat and Ordure, yet are they the moſt noiſom Creatures in the Univerſe, more unclean and naſty than the Swine they loath, and diſtinguiſhable from all Mankind by their rank and abominable Smells. Their Habitations, generally ſpeaking, are like ſo many Styes of Scavengers; and their very Synagogues (the only Places of that little Worſhip and Religion they profeſs) do ſtink even to a Proverb. In a word, like the Progeny of *Cain*, they are kept alive only to wander about the Earth, with Marks of Guilt and Terrour, and with which they have been branded ever ſince the Murder

of the Righteous *Abel*, the great Shepherd, whoſe Offering was more acceptable to God; that Hiſtory being a pregnant Type of the Jews and Chriſt; and for this purpoſe, let us Conſider ſome further Circumſtances which attended that doleful Tragedy.

The Jews, in the Crucifixion of the Bleſſed Jeſus, made Cruelty to be a thing of Paſtime and Recreation. They made a mock King of him, and after they had expos'd him to all deriſion and ſcorn, they wallow'd in his Blood, and ſported at his bitter Anguiſh and Dolours. This indeed was the moſt mournful Spectacle the Sun ever beheld; nay, behold it it could not, for 'twas then Eclips'd, which Eclipſe was Miraculous and Supernatural, for as much as the Moon, at the time of our Saviour's Paſſion, was not in Conjunction, but in Oppoſition to the Sun, or at the Full. Now let us ſee God's Juſtice in the Counterpart. About Six years after our Saviour's Paſſion it was, that the Jews of *Alexandria* were treated ignominiouſly by the Inhabitants of that City at the Command of *Flaccus* their Governour: Their King *Herod Agrippa* was mock'd and derided in the Perſon of one *Carabas*,

Baron. ad An. Chriſti 40.

rabas, an obſcure Fellow, whom they dreſs'd up in Royal Robes, after the Jewiſh Garb to adorn the Pageantry, and then treated him with all manner of inſult and ſcorn. At the ſame time alſo it was, that ſome of the Jews were Whipt and others Crucified. The Jews began their Paſſover with the Blood of the Meſſiah, who was the Paſchal Lamb indeed; and on that very day did they begin to require his Blood at their Hands, and to uſher in the Feaſt, by making them the Sacrifice. Again, the Death which was inflicted on the Meſſiah was Crucifixion; the ſame did *Titus* retaliate on the half famiſh'd Jews, who fled out of the City to the Number of Five hundred, daily, till at length there were not ſufficient Croſſes for Bodies, nor ſpace for Croſſes. In the laſt Place, the Jews pretended they had no other King but *Cæſar*, and that what they did was to prevent the *Romans* from taking away their Government; juſt therefore was it, that thoſe very *Romans* whom they thought to flatter by ſuch a deteſtable Parricide, ſhould revenge their Treachery by taking away their Government.

Now that the People whom God particularly delighted in, and which were engag'd to him by so many Mercies, and he to them by so many Promises, should fall under such an universal and perpetual Dereliction, as never happned to any other People of the Earth to any degree, could not but proceed from such a detestable and most execrable Crime; so that God do's now shew as great a Miracle, in not suffering the Jews to be ruin'd, and so to be deliver'd from their Misery, as he did formerly in delivering them from their Enemies, and in defending them, though a little and inconsiderable Nation, amongst so many Potent Governments which surrounded them; all which Calamities are the dreadful Effects of that almost inexpiable Murder; and of that dire Imprecation of theirs, *Let his Blood be upon us and our Children.*

CHAP.

CHAP. XVIII.

That the Types and Prophecies of the Meſſiah were fulfill'd in Jeſus.

HAving hitherto prov'd the Period of the Jewiſh Religion, not only in its cauſes and the certainty of its Predictions, but alſo in its effects and conſequences, it follows in the next place, that we enquire into the Chriſtian Religion: Now that this, and this only is the True Religion, and the ordinary way by which the Will of God is now made known to Men, and by which we may attain Salvation, is demonſtrable from the Authority of its Author, who was Jeſus of *Nazareth*: The Divine Authority of Jeſus, and his being the promiſed Meſſiah or Saviour of the World, ſhall be prov'd from theſe Three General Arguments. The Firſt is taken from the Types and Prophecies concerning the Meſſiah, and their accompliſhment in the Perſon of Jeſus Chriſt. The Second General Argument is taken from the Hiſtory of his Life, Doctrine and Miracles; to which may be added the Teſtimonies and Confeſſions even of the Adverſaries of our Religion. The Laſt Argument is taken from the wonderful Effects which attend-

ed the Doctrine of Jesus Christ, being no less than the Conversion of the World.

I begin with the Prophecies. As to the time of the Messiah's Birth, it was to commence upon the dissolution of the Jewish Government, as hath been already shewn in the precedent Chapter; which Period hapned about the Time of Jesus Christ's appearance, as hath been prov'd already also. Next, for the place of his Birth, it was to be in *Bethlehem Judah*, according to the unanimous Consent of the Jewish *Sanhedrim*, upon the inquiry made by *Herod*, and which was occasion'd by the *Magi*, who came to Worship Jesus. This the Jewish Priests and Scribes prov'd from that Prophecy of *Micah*, chap. 5. where we read, *But thou Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little amongst the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me, that is to be Ruler* in *Israel*; *whose goings forth have been from of old, from Everlasting.* This Prediction we find actually accomplish'd in the Birth of Jesus (*Luke* the 2.) where we read, that Jesus was born in *Bethlehem*, and in the days of *Herod*, &c. in which Prophecy we have an Account not only of Christ's Human Nature in the History of his Birth, but also of his

his Divine Nature, in his *goings forth which have been from of old, from Everlaſting.* Amongſt the things that were foretold of the Manifeſtation of Jeſus, there is this; *viz.* That he was to have his Meſſenger or Fore-runner, who was to make Proclamation of his coming; which is deſcrib'd by *Iſaiah*, to be the Voice of him *that crieth in the Wilderneſs, prepare ye the way of the Lord, make ſtreight in the Deſart, a High-way for our God*, &c. *and the Glory of the Lord ſhall be revealed, and all Fleſh ſhall ſee it.* This Deſcription we find to be verified of *John* the *Baptiſt*, by his own Anſwer which he gave to the Jews; for when they ask'd him who he was; he told them that he was the *Voice of one crying in the Wilderneſs*, &c. *and ſpoken of by Iſaiah*; *and that there was one amongſt them, who coming after me is preferred before me: And the next day ſeeing Jeſus coming to him, he cried out, Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the ſins of the world. This is he of whom I ſaid, after me cometh a man who is preferr'd before me, and I knew him not.* In which Paſſage we have many Noble Deſcriptions of the Nature and Offices of the Meſſiah; as Firſt, his Sacerdotal Functi-

Iſai. c. 40.

John 1.

on in his being the true Paſchal Lamb to purge the Sins of the World, and of which the Jewiſh Paſſover was but a Type. In the next Place, we have an account of his Divine Nature; for *John* look'd upon himſelf to be but as his Shadow, Chriſt as the Subſtance: *John* was the Voice only of the Forerunner, which ſort of People we know are of a ſervile and much inferiour Nature to thoſe by whom they are employ'd; and yet *John* was by Chriſt himſelf accounted the greateſt of all the Prophets; which thing appears from his Miraculous Birth, as alſo from his Auſtere and Exemplary Life; for which Reaſon he was called *Elias* by Chriſt, and was foretold by *Malachi*. Thirdly, from his Excellent Doctrine, Preaching Repentance and Amendment of Life to all ſorts of People, and Preparing them by Baptiſm: And Laſtly, from his Integrity, Courage and Conſtancy, in reproving *Herod* for his Inceſt, for which he deſerv'd a Crown of Martyrdom. To all which we may add the Teſtimony of the Jews themſelves, who all of them held *John* in the higheſt Veneration of Sanctity; in ſo much that *Joſephus* attributed the Miſfortunes

Malac. c. 3.

Joſeph. lib. 18. c. 7.

fortunes and Over-throw of *Herod*'s Army to the Murder of this Saint. Now if this great Saint was but as a Voice, or a poor tranſitory thing, which vaniſhes in a Moment, in reſpect of Chriſt, Chriſt certainly muſt be more than a Man. And if we conſider the Circumſtances of this interview betwixt Chriſt and *John*, we have further Matter of wonder: For though they were near of Kin, and Contemporaries, yet had they no knowledge of one another before, which ſhews that they liv'd in great Solitude and Retreat before they enter'd upon their Functions: Neither did they take the leaſt notice of their Conſanguinity, but entertain'd one another with Diſcourſes of a ſublimer Nature.

From the Time, Place, and other Circumſtances of the Birth of Chriſt, let us proceed to conſider his Perſon and Offices; and this we have amply deſcrib'd by *Iſaiah*: *For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given*; Here is his human Nature, *and the Government ſhall be upon his Shoulders, and his name ſhall be call'd Wonderful Counſellour, the Mighty God, the Everlaſting Father, the Prince of Peace*: here is his Divine Nature; Iſaiah c. 9.

ture; *Of the encreaſe of his Government and Peace there ſhall be no End. Upon the Throne of David, and upon his Kingdom, to order it, and to eſtabliſh it with Judgment and with Juſtice from hence forth even for ever.* Here we have his Extraction, and the Perpetuity of his Kingdom, which could not be Temporal, ſince the Jews cannot ſhew any ſuch Prince, whoſe Government had no End: It remains therefore, that his Kingdom was Spiritual, and ſuch a one it was that Chriſt was inveſted with, as is evident to all the World: This we have more amply deſcrib'd by the ſame Prophet, by the Rod out of the Iſai. c. 11. Stem of *Jeſſe, and that the Spirit of the Lord ſhall reſt upon him, the Spirit of Wiſdom and Underſtanding, the Spirit of Counſel and of Might, the Spirit of Knowledge and of the fear of the Lord.*

Chriſt's Prophetick Office, as alſo that of his Mediator-ſhip was fore-told by Deut. 18. *Moſes. A Prophet ſhall the Lord thy God raiſe up unto thee, from the midſt of thee, like unto me, unto him ſhall ye hearken, according to all that thou didſt deſire of the Lord thy God in Horeb,* &c. *viz.* When the People ſeeing and hearing the Thunder and Lightnings, entreated *Moſes*

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to ſpeak unto them, and not God, leaſt they ſhould be conſum'd by the dreadful Majeſty of his appearance. That the Jews were in a conſtant expectation of this Prophet ſpoken of by *Moſes*, appears from the *Phariſees* Interrogation of *John*, *whether he were that Prophet?* Now that Chriſt was the Mediator of a Second Covenant, diſtinct from that which was made upon *Mount Horeb* and *Sinah*, is taught every where through the Goſpel. His Dominion and Regal Pomp in his Triumphant entring into *Jeruſalem* on an Aſs, is punctually deſcrib'd by *Zachary*, *Rejoyce greatly O Daughter of Zion, ſhout O Daughter of Jeruſalem: Behold thy King cometh unto thee; He is juſt and having Salvation, lowly and riding upon an Aſs, and upon a Colt, the Foal of an Aſs*; and a little after; *He ſhall ſpeak Peace unto the Heathen, and his Dominion ſhall be from Sea even to Sea, and from the River even to the ends of the Earth.* Zach cap. 9.

From the Nature of Chriſt's Government and Offices, we are come in the laſt place to conſider of his great Sacerdotal Function in his Paſſion, and the Circumſtances and Merits of his Death: all this we have moſt accurately and pathetically

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ly deſcrib'd by *Iſaiah*; who ſeems rather to write a Hiſtory than a Prophecy of his Paſſion. He deſcribes him as a tender Plant growing up out of the Ground: and indeed we find him every where called the little Shoot, Bud, or Branch out of the Root of *Jeſſe*: Foraſmuch as his firſt appearance was to be very diminutive and inconſiderable; or according to the Prophets farther Character of him: *He hath no Form nor Comeline ſs*; *and when we ſhall ſee him, there is no Beauty that we ſhould deſire him*: *He is deſpiſed and rejected of men, a man of ſorrows*; *ſurely he hath born our Griefs, and carried our Sorrows*: *Yet we did eſteem him ſtricken, ſmitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our Tranſgreſſions, he was bruiſed for our Iniquities*: *The chaſtiſement of our Peace was upon him*; *and with his Stripes are we healed*; *the Lord hath laid upon him the Iniquity of us all.* And a little after we find him brought as a Lamb to the Slaughter *and that opened not his mouth. He was taken from Priſon, and from Judgment, and who ſhall declare his Generation*, &c. *For the Tranſgreſſion of my people was he ſmitten*; *and he made his Grave with the wicked.* Then follows the Satisfaction and Merits of his Paſſion:

Iſa. c. 53.

Paſſion: *When thou ſhalt make his Soul an Offering for Sin, he ſhall ſee his Seed, he ſhall prolong his Days, and the pleaſure of the Lord ſhall proſper in his Hand: He ſhall ſee of the Travel of his Soul and ſhall be ſatisfied. By his Knowledge ſhall my Righteous Servant juſtifie many; for he ſhall bear their Iniquities.* And laſtly; the Prophet concludes this moſt remarkable Prophecy, with Chriſt's Glorious Reſurrection and Exaltation. *Therefore will I divide him a Portion with the Great; and he ſhall divide the Spoil with the Strong; becauſe he hath poured out his Soul unto death; and he was numbred with the Tranſgreſſors; and he bore the ſin of many, and made Interceſſion for the Tranſgreſſors.* And in the following Chapter the Prophet invites the Church to celebrate their Deliverance in an Epinicion, *Sing O Barren*, &c. Alſo he deſcribes the amplitude of the Church moſt elegantly, ſaying, *Enlarge the place of thy Tent, and let them ſtretch forth the Curtains of thine Habitations; ſpare not, lengthen thy Cords, and ſtrengthen thy Stakes; for thou ſhalt break forth on the right hand and on the left; and thy Seed ſhall inherit the Gentiles*, &c. and then tells the reaſon: *For thy Maker is thy Husband, the Lord of Hoſts is his Name; and thy*

thy Redeemer the holy One of Iſrael, *the God of the whole Earth ſhall he be called.*

To enumerate all the Paſſages of the Prophets upon this ſublime Subject, would be upon the matter to tranſcribe their Books. Let us haſten forwards then, and glance a little upon the Types of Chriſt, as they are ſhadow'd out to us in the Acts and Monuments of the *Jewiſh* Hiſtory. *Joſhua*, or *Jeſus* [for they are the ſame, and ſignifie a Deliverer or Saviour] was he who ſubdued the Enemies of the Children of *Iſrael*, and brought them into the Land of Promiſe and of reſt: A Type of Jeſus, who was the Saviour both of *Jews* and *Gentiles*; who overcame their Spiritual Enemies, and brought them alſo into the Land of Reſt, even the King-
Numb. 21. dom of Heaven. Thoſe diſobedient *Jews* in the Wilderneſs, who were bit by Serpents, by looking on the brazen Serpent that was upon the Poſt, were healed. This Hiſtory repreſented the lifting up of Jeſus upon the Croſs; where ſuch as behold him by Faith are cured of thoſe Wounds, by which the old Serpent the Devil ſeeks to deſtroy us in our way to *Canaan*. The Red Cow without Spot or Blemiſh, which was to be burnt without

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the Camp, whoſe Blood was to be ſprinkled before the Tabernacle of the Congregation, and whoſe Aſhes were to be kept for a Purgation for Sin, was alſo a Type of Chriſt, whoſe Blood purifyeth for ſin, and *who alſo ſuffered without the Gate.* Numb. 19. Heb. 13. The Scape Goat which was carried away into the Wilderneſs with the Sins of the People upon his Head, was a Figure alſo of Chriſt: But above all, the Paſchal Lamb, at the ſight of whoſe Blood the deſtroying Angel was made to ſpare the *Iſraelites*, was a compleat Type of Chriſt our Paſſover, who in the time and place of the Paſchal Lamb was offered for us.

Now ſince all theſe Types and Symbols could not have any Power or Virtue in their own Natures to purge away the guilt of Sins; it is apparent, that they were only Signs of Spiritual Gifts, and ſuch as were accompliſh'd in Chriſt, as the Scripture fully witneſſeth. Neither let it ſeem abſurd that God ſhould figure ſuch ſublime Myſteries by contemptible and low things: For had he made uſe of nobler Types, there might have been ſome danger, that the Figure or Type might have been miſtaken for the thing figur'd: as if in the

the place of a Lamb or Goat had ſome Illuſtrious Perſon, and of great Sanctity been offer'd, in progreſs of time ſuch a Type or Perſon would have been looked upon as the very Mediator himſelf; whereas God thought it better to repreſent theſe Myſteries by ſuch ordinary and common Creatures, as all Men could not but look upon as Figures, holding no other Similitude with the thing ſignified, than as they were without Spot and Blemiſh, and capable of dying.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIX.

The Objections of the Jews Answered.

TIs now high Time, to see what Ground the Jews have for their Belief, that the *Messiah* must be a Temporal Prince of the Tribe of *Judah*, and such a one as should gather together all the Scatter'd Members of that Nation, and unite them into a Body, and resettle them in *Jerusalem*, and subdue the World under him, as did *Alexander* and *Cæsar*. That which seems most to Countenance this Belief, is grounded upon that Passage of *Isaiah* before mentioned, where by the consent both of Jews and Christians, the Rod or Root of *Jesse* there Described, is no other then the Messiah who shall stand for an Ensign to the People, and whom the Gentiles shall deprecate. *And it shall come to pass in that Day, that the Lord shall set his Hand again the second Time, to recover the Remnant of his People which shall be left, from* Assyria, *and from* Egypt, *and from* Pathros, *and from* Cush, (*or* Ethiopia,) *and from* Elam, *and from* Shinar, *and from* Hamath, *and from the Islands of the Sea. And he shall set up an Ensign against the Nations*, (as the Vul- Isaiah cap. 11.

gar reads it) *and gather together the diſperſed of* Judah *from the four Corners of the Earth*, &c. And afterwards he tells us, That *Ephraim* and *Judah* ſhall be reconcil'd and deſtroy their Enemies, the *Philiſtines*, and thoſe of the *Eaſt*, the *Moabites*, *Edomites* and *Ammonites*, together with the *Egyptians*; and that *Nilus* ſhall be ſmitten in its ſeven Streams, &c.

To this I Anſwer: Firſt, That the Bleſſings here Mention'd, have no Relation to ſuch a Temporal Deliverance as the Jews dream'd off, but to that Spiritual Deliverance they ſhall meet with in their General Converſion to Chriſt before the end of the World. This is plain by the whole Account we have of this Matter from the Context; for Verſes 4*th.* and 5*th.* of this Chap. 'tis ſaid, *That he ſhall ſmite the Earth with the Rod of his Mouth, and with the Breath of his Lips ſhall he ſlay the Wicked. That Righteouſneſs ſhall be the Girdle of his Loins, and Faithfulneſs ſhall be the Girdle* or Belt *of his Reins.* So here we ſee, That his Weapons are all Doctrinal and Spiritual; Nor is he deſcrib'd by his Chariots and Horſemen, by his Bows and Spears, but by his Wiſdom in underſtanding the Will of God; by his Integrity in Judgment, and by his Condeſcenſion to the Meek and Poor. And that he ſhould not be uſher'd in with the

the loud Allarms of War, but with the sweet Fruits of an Universal Peace; so that all the Beasts of the Field, both the Tame and those of Prey, should live and feed together: Moreover, he foretells, *vers.* the 10*th.* That his Rest or Sepulchre shall be Glorious; which passage cannot be applied to any, but to Jesus of *Nazareth*, in the circumstance of his most Glorious and Miraculous Resurrection. As for that Passage, that he should Erect his Ensign or Standard against the Gentiles, 'twas most certainly verified of Jesus, who set up his Sign, even that victorious one of the Cross, by which he overcame the *Roman* Empire, and which will be still Triumphant even to the end of the World.

In the next place, As this Dominion of the promised Messiah was Spiritual, so the Blessings of it were to extend to the Gentiles, which could not be, were he to have been such a secular Conquerer as the Jews dreamed off; for the Gentiles then would have been his Slaves and Captives; whereas by the account of the Prophets, they were to bear a part in the Jubile and in the Benefits of his Government; whence it was that the same Prophet *Isaiah* burst out into a Rapture, Crying, *Arise, shine, for thy Light is come, and the Glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.* (vers. 3.) *The Gentiles* Isaiah cap. 60.

ſhall come to thy Light, and Kings to the Brightneſs of thy Riſing. Moreover, the ſame Prophet amongſt other Deſcriptions which he gives of the Meſſiah, ſays, that he ſhall be a *Light for the Gentiles*; which Character occurs in many other Paſſages of the Prophets. Now 'tis known to all, that the Uſe and Benefit of a Light, is not to conſume, but to direct Men in the way, and to ſecure them from Erring, and falling into Danger. To all which we may add, the Prediction of *Jacob* in his Benediction of *Judah*, where he ſays of *Shiloh*, that he ſhould be *the expectation of the Gentiles*. *Zachary* when he invites the Daughters of *Zion* and *Jeruſalem* to ſhout for Joy, deſcribes the Triumphant Entrance of their King, or the Meſſiah by his humble riding upon an Aſs, and by his ſpeaking Peace to the Gentiles, and the largeneſs of his Dominions even from Sea to Sea, and to the utmoſt ends of the Earth: None of which Deſcriptions can ever agree to any Temporal Prince of the Jews, much leſs to ſuch a Meſſiah as they dream off, who was to Triumph by Deeds of War over the Heathen; whereas the Meſſiah there deſcrib'd, was to win them to his Government by the ſweet Charms of Peace.

Iſaiah cap. 42.

Zach. cap. 9.

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In the last place, the Imagination of the Jews, that the Messiah should be a Temporal Prince, is utterly inconsistent with the grand Scope of the Scriptures, which teach us every where to forsake the World with all the Pomps and Vanities thereof, and not to build our Happiness on Temporal Enjoyments. Besides, the Promise of the Messiah was a thing of Joy: *Be joyfull O Daughter of* Zion, *shout O* Jerusalem, *clap your Hands, and shout as in a Jubile*, are the usual Forms which usher in the News of the Messiah. Now were he to have been a Prince of Grandure, what matter of Joy could it have been to a poor Jew to think, that many Ages after he was dead and forgotten, there should some mighty *Grand Signior* arise in his Country, who should do Wonders? Just as much comfort as it would be to me, were I in Wants and Misery, and complaining of my Condition to some Reverend and Learned Doctor, instead of relieving my Necessities, he should tell me, Friend, be of good Comfort, and leap for Joy; for about 2000 Years hence and better, their shall arise a high and mighty King in *England*, who shall Conquer all the Nations round about him, and his Subjects shall live in great Peace and Plenty: Such a thought certainly would be so far from easing my pre-

ſent Unhappineſs, that it would rather encreaſe it; when I ſhould think ſeriouſly of ſuch remote Contents, and ſuch as I ſhould never taſte of; and yet this is the Caſe of the Unbelieving, or rather of the All-believing Jews, who after the diſappointments and calamities of ſo many Ages, are as earneſt as ever in the Expectation of their Meſſiah. But the Benefits of the Meſſiah being Spiritual, (as is taught by the Chriſtians,) they are Communicable to Men through all Ages of the World, and can reach the remoteſt Nations; which indeed, was no other then what was foretold by the Prophets, nor is this belief attended with any difficulties whatſoever.

I confeſs that many of theſe Prophetick Paſſages ſeem to have alluſion to good King *Joſias*, (who enter'd upon his Kingdom when he was a Child,) as alſo to the Temporal Deliverance of the Jews from under the Babyloniſh Captivity. But ſtill 'tis true, and allow'd even by the Jews themſelves, that they had a much farther proſpect, even to a greater Deliverance: For neither could *Joſias*, nor *Zorobabel*, nor any of the Jewiſh Worthies be call'd Deliverers. God knows, they were poor Supplicants, and depended wholly upon the Indulgence of the *Perſians*. But the Circumſtance of the Gentiles being to be made partakers of

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these Blessings, extends the Benefits of these Prophesies infinitely beyond the Fortune of the Jewish Nation, who were ever after but a poor scattered and precarious People.

As to the Authority of these and many such like Prophesies, even Atheism it self cannot question it; unless we say, That the Jews after the appearance of Jesus Christ, did stuff the Old Testament with such Prophetick Passages as made against themselves and their Religion. Besides, all these Passages being found in the Translation of the *Septuagint*, and considering also with what exactness the Jews kept these sacred Copies, even to numbring the very Letters, how negligent soever they were in observing the Commandments of the Law; 'tis utterly impossible such Passages should be foisted in without their knowledge, as it is impossible that such certain and punctual Predictions should proceed from any other Mouth, but that of Almighty God; and this I take to be an Argument, *ad hominem*, and such as might convince even *Porphyry* himself, were he now alive. And so I have done with the Old Testament.

CHAP. XX.

The Advent of Jeſus prov'd from Heathen Predictions.

BUt beſides the Propheſies recorded in Sacred Writings; we have other Predictions alſo out of profane Monuments, which though of an inferiour Authority, are very appoſite to prove the Verity of Chriſt's Meſſiah-ſhip. All the Hiſtories of the Age wherein Chriſt was Born, doe teſtifie that both *Herod*, as alſo the Jews, were in preſent Expectation of the Meſſiah. Hence it was, that *Herod* who yielded up himſelf to the flatteries of his Followers, was eaſily perſuaded to think that he himſelf was the promiſed Meſſiah; and thoſe who adhered to this Belief, were in Scripture called *Herodians*, as is conjectur'd: For the Jews finding *Herod* to be a King of great Power, and who rebuilt the Temple alſo after a moſt magnificent Form; they preſently concluded that this was he who was to reſtore their State and Empire. And *Herod* too was not wanting to himſelf to improve ſuch favourable overtures; upon which account it was, that he committed ſo many Murders even on his own Chil-

Children also, hoping in the general Massacre to extinguish the true Messiah wherever he was, as *Josephus* tell us; we read also in *Suetonius*, in the Life of *Vespasian*, as also in *Tacitus*, how it was the Belief of many in that Age, that in the Sacred Monuments of the Priest was registred, that out of *Judea* should come forth those who were to govern the World, which was erroneously interpreted of *Titus* and *Vespasian*.

Joſ. de lib. Jud. l. 7. c. 7.

Tacit l. 5. Hiſter.

But above all, Those famous Monuments of the *Sybills* are a compleat evidence of this Truth. *Tully* whilst he endeavours to evacuate the Credit of these Propheſies, reports this Passage out of them: *That he who was indeed to be our King, was to be called also a King in Case we would obtain Salvation.* This Propheſie was contain'd in the initial Letters of some Verses; which for this reason also, were called *Acrosticks*, telling us withall, that the Propheſies of the *Sybills* were lockt up, and were not to be inspected, but by order of the Senate; forasmuch as they seem rather to contribute to the Subversion then to the Conservation of Religion, there being nothing more odious to the *Romans* than the thing called [*King*] which was legible throughout these Sacred Books. And truly so plain did they speak of

Tul. lib. 2. de Divin.

of Christ's Government and Kingdom, that even amongst the Sacred Prophets, we shall not meet with a Description more apposite then what was transcrib'd by *Vergil* out of these Sybelline Oracles; who by his Intimacy with *Augustus* obtain'd a sight of them, applying in his Genethliacon of *Saloninus*, the Son of *Asinius Pollio*, who was a Favorite of the Emperor's, those Passages which in Truth could belong to none but Jesus; as appears evidently from this Description.

Eclog. 4. *The happy Days are come, foretold long since,*
By Cuman, Sybills, *Sacred Song from hence;*
All future Ages shall there date commence.
The Virgin too returns the upright raign,
Of Ancient Saturn now returns again.
An Off-spring now to us from Heavens sent forth,
Help, chast Lucina, *this celestial Birth;*
Which puts a Period to the Iron Race,
And o're the World a Golden one does place.
Whose heavenly conduct shall mankind deliver,
From all their Guilt, freed from all fears for ever.
Whose God-like Life, shall yet more glorious prove,
By listing Hero's *'mongst the bless'd above.*
These shall behold him too, who never shall cease,
By 's Fathers Art, to rule the World in Peace.

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Such a lofty Description as this, could by no means square with the Circumstances of *Soloninus*, who died nine days after he was Born. Nay, had *Augustus* himself had a Son, I question whether these Characters could have been applied to him, even under a Poetick License of Flattery. In short, they were transcrib'd out of the Sybelline Oracles, to which the Ancient Writers of the Church so often appeal'd, as to the most uncorrupted Monument of Antiquity: Forasmuch as these Books were kept by the *Romans* with the greatest care imaginable, under the Custody of the Colledge of Sacred Rites, call'd *Quindecem viri*, and and so impossible to be alter'd by the Christians. Nor could these Passages be interpreted of any but of Jesus, who being he that was to give Peace to the World, was born also under the Reign of *Augustus*, who shutting up the Temple of *Janus*, proclaim'd this Memoriall and glorious Passage; that at the time of our Saviour's Birth, there was a Universal Cessation of Arms over all the Earth, as was predicted, and was necessary to introduce this Prince of our Eternal Peace.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXI.

Of the Doctrines of Jeſus.

THe ſecond General Argument by which we have propos'd to prove the Truth of Chriſt's Meſſiah-ſhip, is taken from his Doctrine; as alſo from the Hiſtory of his Life and Miracles, as they are repreſented to us in the Writings of the New Teſtament. Now in theſe Writings there are two things to be conſider'd; firſt, their Authors, ſecondly, their Authority. To prove their Authors, we have no other way but by humane Authorities; but yet ſuch too as are ſtrengthen'd by all the evidence of Reaſon: For if it were raſhneſs unpardonable to queſtion the Truth of *Cæſars* conquering *Britain*, or of his Defeating *Pompey*, and of his being Murdred in the Senate; for as much as the Books which report theſe things, are eſteem'd to be the Genuine works of thoſe who liv'd in the ſame Age, whoſe names alſo are prefix'd to them, tis certainly much greater madneſs to doubt, that the Books of the New Teſtament were writ by the Apoſtles, ſince we find a more univerſal and uninterrupted belief hereof in the concurring

curring Voices of an Infinite number of learned Men from Age to Age, even to the very times these Sacred Authors flouriſh'd; and this is that which we call the Authority of the Church, or univerſal Tradition.

The other Point reſpects the Authority of theſe Writings. That they have tranſmitted to Poſterity a true Hiſtory of Jeſus, and were Divinely inſpir'd, appears from the near Relation they had to Chriſt in being inſtructed by him; ſo that they could neither deceive or be deceiv'd: For the ſame Arguments which prove the Meſſiah-ſhip and Divine Gift of Jeſus, prove the Teſtimonies of thoſe to whom he reveal'd his Doctrine, to be convincing and infallible. Now here comes in a Point about which Papiſts and Proteſtants raiſe a mighty Diſpute, *viz.* How the Authority of the Apoſtles Writings, call'd the Word of God, can depend upon Tradition, which is an Inferiour kind of Authority. To underſtand this point, we are carefully to diſtinguiſh betwixt the Authority of a Witneſs, and the Authority of a Judge. The former is only Miniſterial, Declaratory, and converſant about matter of Fact; the other is Magiſterial and Legiſlative, and may concern matters of Faith; that is, ſuch Divine Truths, as are many times above

bove our Natural Reason to understand. Now that Divine Truths, as to their manifestation, should depend upon the Authority or Testimony of the Church, is not at all absurd; but very consonant to Reason, which in Scripture Phrase, is called an Evidence or Reason of our Belief or Hope: But then Evidence once made, we are requir'd to yield an implicit kind of assent to the Doctrines of Scripture, upon the account of the Divine Authority and veracity of their Author, as being an infallible Legislator, and upon that score to be believed in whatsoever he saies, though never so difficult to our Wills and Understandings; and this is called Faith. Let us illustrate this Point a little; For instance, The King sends his Letters Mandatory by his Messenger, or some other person of Credit and Reputation; Upon the persuasion we have of the Credit and Reputation of the Messenger, we receive such Letters as Royal Mandates, with a suitable Veneration, and then without more adoe, we yield, or ought to yield Obedience to them in the same manner, as if his Royal Majesty were present in Person to enjoin the Contents. Here 'tis plain, we make a difference betwixt the Authority of the Testimony or Messenger, and the Authority of the Prince; and yet we should not easily

easily submit to these Letters, were they not attested by such credible means: for should we find such Letters in the Streets, or Highways, though never so Patent, and Sign'd and Seal'd with all Formalities Imaginable, we should not take much Notice of them, much less be oblig'd to pay our Obedience to them; so that here we see, how the Motives of Assent are one thing, and the Subject of Assent is another, and of a higher Nature, though depending on the former.

Having clear'd the way to the reason of our Belief, let us now Consider the Scope and Contents of the New Testament, and we shall find them to be either Doctrinal, or Historical. The Doctrinals are such as are Conversant about matters of Belief, or matters of Practise. We shall begin with matters of Belief, the grand Scope whereof seems to level at this one Fundamental Point; that Jesus is the Christ, or the promised Messiah: This, as it hath been already prov'd from the Prophesies of the Old Testament, let us now proceed to prove also by the actual Offices of a Messiah or Redeemer. A Redeemer is one who pays a Debt for another, and sets him at Liberty, and properly it has respect to Slaves or Men Imprison'd, who are unable of themselves to satisfie their Creditors, or those

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to whom they are in Bondage. Now Christ as the Redeemer of Mankind, being a Publick Representative, was under a two-fold Obligation; first, of fulfilling the Law or Commands of God himself, and this is call'd active Obedience; secondly, of satisfying or suffering for the breach of it, and this is call'd Passive Obedience.

Christ's Active Obedience, or his fulfilling the Law, appears several ways, as touching the Moral Law Christ fulfill'd it in his strict Observance of it; but especially in his more perfect Interpretation of it, by shewing its true, full and genuine Sense, which indeed is the Soul of every Law. The Jews look'd only to the outward performance or shell of the Law, whereas Christ had regard to the inward bent of the Soul, and to the Affections. The Law said, *Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God*; Christ saies, *Thou shalt love him with all thy heart, and with all thy strength*; The Law saith, *Thou shalt not take the Name of the Lord thy God in Vain*; Christ goes further, saying, *Swear not at all*; The Law saies, *Thou shalt not kill, thou shalt not commit Adultery*; Christ saies, *Whosoever is angry with his Brother without a cause, shall be in danger of Judgment*, and that whosoever *looketh on a Woman with a lustfull thought, committeth Adultery in his Heart.* Christ forbids

forbids not onely all false Testimonies, but even all idle Works. Then for the Judicial Law, it was *Lex Talionis*; an Eye for an Eye, &c. Christ says, *Whosoever shall smite thee on the right Cheek, turn to him the left also.* The Law said, Love thy Neighbour and hate thine Enemy; Christ says, *Love your Enemies, and bless them that curse you.* Also for Alms, Prayer and Fasting, he improves these Duties to an higher degree of Perfection, than that under the Jewish Ordinances. As for the Ceremonial Law, 'tis known that Christ was in all things conformable thereunto; he was circumcis'd, and was presented in the Temple, and he observ'd their Feasts, &c. But besides all this, he fulfill'd these Laws in another Sense, in as much as they were accomplish'd in him; for all the Rites and Sacrifices under the Jewish Law with all their Types, (as hath been already shewed,) were Figures onely of Christ. Now the Figure or Shadow vanishes when the substance comes in place; all the Prophets ceas'd upon the appearance of Christ, as in the presence of a Prince the Office of an Ambassadour ceases: For from the time of *John* the Baptist, who was the last Prophet, and by his preaching Repentance, usher'd in the Blessed Jesus, the Jews never had a Prophet more; a clear proof that he

was the Meſſiah of whom they all writ.

The other Obligation under which Chriſt lay to the Law, was that of his Paſſive Obedience, in ſuffering the Puniſhment due to the Tranſgreſſion of it. *He poured out his Soul unto Death, and bare the ſins of many.* Iſaiah 53. And ſo under theſe two Capacities he made a full Satisfaction, or a Complete Redemption. Now that one Man, as a Repreſentative, ſhould bear the ſins of many, ſeems no way ſtrange; for under the Jewiſh Law, we read of the Scape Goat, on whoſe head the Prieſt transferr'd the ſins of the People with a kind of an *Anathema*, which Goat was preſently after driven out of the Camp into the Wilderneſs, as a Creature utterly polluted and abandon'd. How much more capable then was Jeſus of bearing the ſins of many, who indeed was the thing it ſelf Symboliz'd by that Creature; thus much concerns Chriſt's humane Nature in which he ſuffer'd: But when we call to mind, that the Puniſhment due to the tranſgreſſion of the Law, not onely of the Moſaical, but alſo of the Commandment given to *Adam* was Eternal Death, as the Obedience of the Law was Eternal Life; 'twas neceſſary that this Redeemer or publick Repreſentative of Mankind, ſhould make an infinite ſatisfaction, which ſince it could not

not be *ex parte Pœnis*, for then must he have suffer'd and been damn'd to all Eternity; it remains that both his Active and Passive satisfaction was infinite *ex parte Personæ*, and consequently, that this Redeemer must be God also, so that the Person suffering, was Eternal and Infinite, though the capacity in which he suffer'd, was Infinite and Mortal. This Redeemer therefore was to doe whatsoever Men were oblig'd to doe, whether by the Law of Nature, or that of *Moses*; as he was to suffer also the Punishments due to all Transgressions whatsoever.

By him therefore was the Law fully explain'd, as also the Ceremonial and Levitical Laws abolish'd, by exhibiting the substance or thing it self, to which they had Relation. In him all the Types and Sacrifices had their true Signification; in him were all Predictions terminated; and when all this was done, the blessed Jesus made an Offering of himself to God, commending his Spirit into the hands of his Father, and together with it, the plenary Redemption of the World, in that full and compartial Ejaculation of his Soul, crying or proclaiming with his last Breath, *it is Finished.*

We have taken a short view of the Doctrine of Christ as our Redeemer, and

which we are requir'd to believe. Let us in the next place take a tranſient Glance of Chriſt's Doctrine as our Legiſlatour, and this concerns matter of Practice. This Doctrine is amply propounded to us in the *5th. 6th.* and *7th.* Chap. of St. *Matthew's* Goſpel, where we have his moſt correct and true Explanation of the Decalogue, being ſuch as was according to the true ſcope of the Law, and the Intention of the Lawgiver, of which we have ſpoken already; we have alſo his moſt lively Deſcription, and earneſt Recommendations of theſe excellent duties of Alms, Faſting and Prayer. We are taught Humility, Meekneſs of Spirit, Purity of Affection, Patience under Perſecutions, Chearfulneſs under Slanders and Reproach, and Comfort under Afflictions. We are taught to live Peaceably, and to live Exemptorily; to ſhun Oſtentation, and to unite our ſelves to God by inward Acts of Piety, by holy Duties of Charity and Penance, and by relying upon God's Providence in renouncing the Riches of the World, and avoiding Hypocriſie, and by a prudent Circumſpection, with many other Heavenly Duties and Inſtructions; and laſt of all, by a due Preparation of our ſelves for a general Judgment and life Eternal. This is the ſubject matter of his Divine Sermon upon the Mount, and indeed

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the ſumm and ſubſtance of all Evangelical Duties; we are taught in other places how to addreſs our ſelves to God by Prayer, particularly in that moſt Excellent and Comprehenſive form which is alone ſufficient to prove the Divinity of its Author; we have alſo many Evangelical Counſels, touching voluntary Chaſtity, and our abdication of Riches. He inſtituted holy Sacraments, as inſtruments of conveying Grace, and as Symbols of his Death and Paſſion; as alſo of his Eternal Union with his Church, and as a Bond of Union and Communion amongſt Chriſtians. He took Law for the future Enlargement and Government of his Church, by appointing his Apoſtles the Overſeers of it, endowing St. *Peter* with many ſingular Prerogatives; and laſt of all, he promis'd them the aſſiſtance of his holy Spirit to direct and comfort them, all which was verified in a wonderful manner.

As touching the Nature and Obligation of Evangelical Works, it is a point which will require a little to be inſiſted on; for ſome there are who allow of Evangelical Works, but not as Commands, but as Counſels only; and as ſuch indeed which may adorn our Profeſſion, but yet that they are to be taken up or left at the diſcretion of the Profeſſour. And to inſinuate this, they tell us; That Chriſt came

not with a Legislative Power to introduce new Laws, but to confirm the Moral: And therefore that all those Passages in the *5th.* *6th.* and *7th.* of St. *Matthew*, with whatsoever else accrues in the Evangelists of this Nature, have not the Authority of Precepts, but are seasonous only, and were propos'd by Christ as Invitations to embrace his Faith; and no doubt very privilegious, being much to this purpose. *Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest*; that is, I require you to cut off your right Hands, to pluck out your right Eyes, to bless them that curse you, &c. and to sweeten all with a gracious promise; I tell you, that whosoever would save his Life, shall lose it. This we see is the Gospel Stile, and had our Saviour us'd this Rhetorick by way of Invitation, there needed no other Argument to prove the World's Conversion to have been miraculous. No rational Man can be so blind as to believe, that Christ us'd this Language to allure us to him; that by which he fought, and which prov'd most effectual, to win Men over to Christianity, was the propos'd Happiness and Eternity of another Life; and for the procurement hereof, he prov'd the Exercise of Self-denial, and true Severities in these and such like Passages, as the best Expedient.

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And that these Precepts were not bare Explanations of the Mosaical Law, or Institutions, but had in themselves the force of binding Laws, is very demonstrable from Christ's own Works. *Mat.* 22. *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy Soul, and with all thy Mind.* This is the first and great Commandment, and the second is like unto it: *Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thy self*; which words, though they have Relation to the two Tables of the Decalogue, yet do they exact much more than what is requir'd in them. The ten Commandments being almost all Negatives, confest in these two general Prohibitions of Worshipping false Gods, and of injuring our Neighbour; whereas Christ's commands goe farther. They are positive and require our utmost endeavours to advance the wellfare of our Neighbour, though he be our Enemy, whom the Jewish Law allowed to hate. Farther, the Moral Law had respect onely to the Act, Christ's Law extends to our very Thoughts. Nay, we may observe the like difference in the Judicial Law; there an *Eye for an Eye*, &c. Evil was to be compensated with Evil, but here is no *Lex Talionis*, no returning of like for like, but on the contrary; a quiet submission to him who offers Violence, and instead of revenging an old Injury, to be

prepar'd to receive a new one. Add to this, that Chriſt requires many penetential Duties, ſuch as Faſting, Prayer, giving of Alms and the like, all which being much more than what was requir'd under the Moſaical Ordinances, and running in the Style and Tenour of abſolute Commands, muſt have the Authority of Laws, and obligations conſequently to the obſervance of them, which would farther appear ſhould we conſider the Efficacy of ſuch Duties in the work of our Salvation. But 'tis not my buſineſs here to engage into diſpute: I will poſt on therefore in the courſe of this Argument, to conſider what is without diſpute, *viz.* the Divine Authority of Chriſt's Meſſiah-ſhip, as it is repreſented in his Life and Miracles.

CHAP XXII.

Of the Life of Jeſus.

HAving given a ſhort Syſteme of the Doctrinal part of the Evangeliſts, we are in the next place to conſider of the Hiſtorical, as it relates to the Life and Miracles of the holy Jeſus; or to ſpeak more properly, both theſe are but one: For the Life

Life of Jesus is nothing but one great and continu'd Miracle. He enter'd upon the Throne in a manner very different from those *Heroes* of Old. He was born in a Stable, and laid in a Manger, and expos'd to the cold of the Season, and to many other Inconveniences which attended that great confluence of People occasion'd by *Augustus* his Decree. Presently after he was born, under pretence of being Worship'd, he was hunted after by the most execrable *Herod* to be murther'd. He was hurried from place to place in the Arms of his tender Mother, the ever blessed Virgin, who was expos'd to perpetual Labours, Fears, Sorrows, and many wants and difficulties as to all wordly helps. He was forc'd to fly into *Egypt*, the House of Bondage, that he might find relief and safety. He was the reputed Son of an honest laborious Carpenter; he liv'd afterwards at *Nazareth*, a poor inconsiderate Village, then remarkable only for its Obscurity, and by the Jews held ignoble to a Proverb: Hence it was, that by way of contempt he was call'd a *Nazarene*, and the primitive Christians out of the like contempt were called *Nazarenes*, witness that calumnious Invective of *Tertullus* against St. *Paul*. He was also called a *Galilæan* in a way of Ignominy, by *Julian* and *Porphyry*; his

his Condition of Life was in ſome reſpect worſe than that of the Beaſts and Fowls of the Air; for he had no certain place of Habitation, where to retreat at ſuch time as he began to enter upon his Commiſſion. As to all worldly appearance, he was poor and deſtitute, perſecuted and defam'd; walking always in the midſt of Snares and Treacheries, converſing with Publicans and Sinners, and attended only with a few deſpicable Fiſhermen. This was the State and Grandeur, this was the Pomp and Equipage of our great and immortal *Hero*, and yet ſtill there was a Heavenly Luſtre breaking forth in the midſt of all theſe Clouds, through every Paſſage of his Life, and when moſt eclips'd, he was glorified with ſome Rays of a Divine Majeſty.

As to the Vertues of his Soul they were ineffable; he was always doing Good, ſuffering Evil; always Teaching, and by his own Example, proving the verity of what he Taught; always relieving Men s neceſſities, whether Temporal or Spiritual, and healing their Infirmities: He was chearful and yet innocent in his Converſation, and in his Reproofs indulgent, and yet ſevere. He was pitiful towards the afflicted, and rigorous with none but with the treacherous Hypocrites, and the boaſting and ſupercilious Phariſees. He was more pure and

and chaste than Angels, most gentle and sweet in his Disposition, lovely and meek in his Deportment, negligent of Himself, but most vigilant, zealous and active for the Glory of God, and never discompos'd by any extravagance of Anger, Fear, Sorrow, Joy, or any other Intemperance of Passion whatsoever, though he sometimes expres's'd his Tenderness for *Jerusalem* by most compassionate Ejaculations, and by a flood of Tears. Whereſoever he went, he made himself to be known, and publick by great acts of Charity and Self-denial: One while we find him disputing with the subtile Scribes and Pharisees, confounding them with his Answers, and eluding all their Captious and Treacherous Discourses with a Wisdom equal to that of a Serpent, but defending his own Integrity with the innocence of the Dove. As to his manner of expressing himself, it was by Parables, which way of speaking made a lasting impression on the Minds of Men, by representing Spiritual things under such sensible Forms as were obvious to the Capacities of all, and easie to be remembred; but withall they were of incomparable weight and signification, and truly, such is the Scope, Pertinence, and Veracity of these sacred Parables, as could proceed from no other than the Son of God. But above all, his last

last Speech and Discourse with his Disciples after his last Supper is most Pathetick and Divine, firmly to be read by Angels, and capable to inspire the most obdurate Soul with the love of Martyrdom; and they shew sufficiently with what a filial Resignation of himself to the Will of God, with what melting Tenderness towards his Disciples, and with what a holy and ardent Charity towards the World, this holy Victim was prepar'd to make his Offering.

CHAP. XXIII.

Objections Answer'd.

THE Life and Doctrine of the blessed Jesus so just and holy as they were gave great offence both to Jews and Gentiles, or as the Apostle Words it; *Christ was to the Jews a stumbling Block, and to the Greeks foolishness:* There were two things at which both were highly offended, the first was, the Meanness, Poverty and Humility of his Life, and especially the Innocency of his Death. To the Life of Christ we refer all those outwards Considerations of his Parentage, Birth, Countrey, Society,

ty, Fortune, with such like Circumstances as attended his Mortal State. *Is not this the Carpenter's Son, is not his Mother called* Mary? *Can any good thing come out of* Galilee? *that he was a Wine-bibber, a friend of Publicans and Sinners,* was the common cry of the Calumniating Jews. *Tryphon* though he lent an attentive Ear to the reasonings of *Justin Martyr*, and seem'd sometimes to bend to his persuasion, could never condescend to this; That he who was inglorious, despis'd and crucified, could be the Saviour of the World: This was as far above the reach of his reason to understand, as it seem'd to be beneath the Majesty of God to suffer; for he fell under the severest curse of the Law by being Crucified. What sentiments the Gentiles had of Christ, as they are recorded by *Origen*, are too Blasphemous for Christian Laws. In short, the result of all these difficulties turn'd upon this Quire, *viz.* how it could stand with the Grandeur of God, of one who is infinitely glorious to be made Man, to be surrounded with the Infirmities of Flesh, and to be expos'd to Fears and Sorrow? Had it not been better for him to have discover'd his Divinity by the bright or known Character of Majesty and Power? This indeed had been more consonant to his Nature, and more conducible to the end design'd

Just. in deut contra Tryph.

Contra Celf. lib. 1. c. 29.

in his Incarnation, which was the conversion of Men; since Men must sooner yield Obedience to an Authority which is deriv'd visibly from God, than to the Commands of one, who as to all appearance, was Poor and Despicable. If he were the Son of God, why was he Apprehended, Judg'd, Condemn'd and Executed? Why did not he free himself from the stroke of Death, and his Honour from the foul suspicion of Guilt and Impotence?

To these and such like scandalous Calumnies, 'tis answer'd; That Christ's Exinanition, or his divesting himself of his Glory, by assuming that servile State, under which he is every where represented to us in the Gospel, was necessary upon a double account. First, for an Example of Vertue. Secondly for the greater declaration of his own Glory. First then, such a condition made him to be an Example of Vertue to others, and to shew the abilities and strength of humane Nature to resist Temptations; for to use the reasonings of *Lactantius* upon this Argument; how could all pretences and colourable excuses of Men be cut off, unless he who is to teach another, make the duty practicable by his own Example and Performance; and how can he doe the things which he teacheth, unless he be made like unto him who is to follow his Direction?

Lactant. lib. 4. de verâ sapient. c. 24.

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Had not Christ been subject to Passions, Man might readily have repli'd; true indeed, 'tis my endeavour as well as my desire, not to sin; but alas, I am compell'd to yield to Nature, I am oppress'd and burthened with the infirmities of my Flesh, of my own weak and frail Nature, so that the evil which I would not doe, that doe I. Now to cut of all such Evasions, what better expedient could there be, than for Christ to attest and experimentally to demonstrate that Flesh and Blood had a Power not to sin, and Abilities to pursue its own happiness, and this from his own performance, who was himself molested with the like Infirmities; manners are sooner reformed by Example than by Precept. Thus was it necessary that our Saviour should be *made like unto us in all things, sin excepted.*

In the next place, as his knowledge was a Precedent for our Invitation, so was it extreamly conducing to the Declaration of his own Glory; this will appear more fully by and by, when we come to consider the consequences of Christ's converse with Men, and the wonderful success his Doctrine has found in the Conversion of the World. Had Christ appear'd like some temporal Prince, attended with pompous Trains, assisted by Great, Wise, and Learned Counsellours,

sellours, and strengthned with the alliances of secular Princes, and with all the advantages of a Civil and Military Power, the whole fabrick of Christianity might justly have been suspected for a thing of humane Invention and Policy, and liable to be ruin'd by force or civil Alterations. But when we shall with Amazement consider, that all those grand Revolutions which follow'd in the World's Conversion, proceeded from one so seemingly impotent, and utterly destitute of all suitable means and instruments for so great an Enterprice, and this too by suffering an accurs'd death; reason must conclude, that the Author of such a Miraculous change, could be no other but God; and that the Religion which he introduced, must be Immutable and Eternal. As for Christ's Conversation with Publicans and Sinners, 'twas no other than what was foretold of him, and what he himself openly averr'd to be expedient, since he came to save that which was lost, and that they were not the righteous and the sound, but the sinners and the sick which mov'd him to Compassion, and which requires his presence; for where should the Physician be but amongst his diseas'd Patients who implore his help.

Another thing for which many Men through all Ages have been offended with the

the blessed Jesus, is the seeming severity of his Doctrine; for he that will be Christ's Disciple, must take up his Cross and deny himself: And for this purpose let us suppose Dominion, Honour, Riches, Fame, Pleasures, with all those fady Beauties or Parents of Happiness, which fill our apprehensions, to be placed before us; let us suppose likewise Christianity to be array'd in its most homely dress, as presenting nothing but Want and Difficulties, Hatred and Disgrace: As requiring us to return Good for Evil, Blessings for Curses, to feed our Enemies, and to afflict our selves. Of these two Estates, Nature prompts us to choose the former; Christ requires us to prefer the later, in which Case the will cannot but be under violent Temptations: For although Christ requires not our Services for nothing, but has annex'd Rewards to our Duties, and such as infinitely exceed the worth and merit of the performance; yet since these Rewards are Spiritual; and to be receiv'd in another Life, 'tis certain they can never sway the Majority of Men, who making sense to be the measure of their Happiness, cannot but unite their Affections to things visible and near at hand. Nay, it requires a Man to have a well grounded Faith, and to be fortified with hardy Resolutions, who being to balance his

felt Calamities against conceiv'd Felicity, shall choose rather to lie under the weight of his present Miseries, than forfeit his Title to such Contents as are future and remote.

'Tis true, the face of Religion, like that of *Diana's* Statue anciently at *Chios*, seems sad and cloudy to those who are to enter, but to them that are within, it appears serene and chearfull. The Gospel at the first appearance seems rigid and undelightfull; it wants that face or varnish which affects the Sense, yet to them who are acquainted with it, its ways are ways of pleasantness. To prove this, we need no more but to conjecture, Frist, the great Rewards which crown our Sufferings, which Rewards though they be future, are sufficient to support our Hopes, being founded in God's veracity. This is no more than what we may observe in the ordinary occurrences of Life, where we find daily what hardship Men endure, what disappointments they wrastle with, and what expense they lie at to purchase perhaps some small Estate or Office, or to acquire some little Title of Honour, which things peradventure may never be obtain'd, or if they be, Men are but faster hamper'd in the snare, and by pains arrive to greater pains; what is this World's Glory, but the breath

breath of popular Air? and yet so desirous are Men of this breath of others, that in the pursuit thereof, they have many times lost their own; when yet the Rewards which Christians are invited to by Gospel Duties are so Solid and Eternal. In the next place, the Duties of Christianity will yet appear to be more easie and supportable, if we consider the Assistance promis'd to Mens endeavours, and the Mercy and Pardon upon their Repentance for their failings. Besides, affirmative commands are not always to be observ'd, nor do they so much require the actual Performances, as the Thoughts and Disposition of the Mind, *viz.* to be resolv'd to suffer Pains, and Ignominy of the Cross, and to forsake all Temporal Enjoyments for the sake of Almighty God when occasion shall require.

In the last place, though there were no Rewards annext to the Observance of Religious Duties, yet is there no just reason to except against them as rigid and severe; for as much as even in this Life they carry along with them their own Reward. The *Stoicks* I confess were Men of some Principles; for they held that a Man might be then most happy, when he was most miserable; not as though Misery were Happiness formally and in it self, but materially only: Because as an Object it ministers Tul. l. 5. de finibus Bon. & Mal.

occaſion for a Man to exert thoſe Acts of vertue which conſtitute him happy. Whether this Doctrine of theirs were only a Bravery of Speculation, or a fixt Perſuaſion and Belief, is not my buſineſs to determine: Thus much it ſheweth, that theſe Philoſophers, who ſaw only by the divine light of Nature, and knew little of another life, had ſuch apprehenſions of the Excellency of Man's Nature, as to think all outward Objects, though never ſo repugnant to it, to be too weak and inſufficient to diſcompoſe it; which conſideration is of infinite more force in a Chriſtian upon the Proſpect he has of another Life. But waving this, as I have now ſtated the matter; let us examine it a little by the Meaſures and Circumſtances of this preſent Life. Men naturally are of a Temper which is haughty and vindicative; Chriſt requires his Followers to be humble, and long ſuffering under all provocations whatſoever. Let us now ſee which is eaſier to follow, he who is ſway'd by inclinations of Revenge, with how many reſtleſs hours muſt he be afflicted himſelf in contriving means for the Execution of it; with what loſs of Time, Content, Reputation, and perhaps Eſtate and Death, does he combate his own Enjoyments to diſturb thoſe of him he hates, which whether he compaſs or fail of, he is

equally

equally miserable. Whereas the good Christian suffers but a short conflict within himself, in resisting the first resentments of Nature, and then he is at rest; but above all, he acquires a reputation of vertue amongst all good Men, by whom he is belov'd and honour'd; and acquires also an entire and noble conquest over his Enemy by the all-subduing Arms of Love; for there was never Man so devoted to Malice, as would for ever persecute a vertuous and prostrate Innocence. Nature prompts Men to Lust, to Pleasures, to Ambition and the like; I need not enlarge upon the evil consequences of such disorders. It is an Argument very copious and pleasing, and almost every where spoken to with good success; when on the contrary the good Christian by resisting these Temptations of Life, is not only deliver'd from all their fatal Effects, but by confining his Enjoyments within these due Limits, or by transferring his Passions upon nobler Objects, he meets with a full satisfaction of his desires in a solid Fruition of himself, and tastes the chaste pleasures of Angels in a Reflection upon the Innocence and spotless Tenour of his Life. Whilst he who lets his unbridled Passion range through all the Regions of sensual Delights, which fancy can create, does but shorten his days, and

poiſon even thoſe ſmall Enjoyments of the life he ſpends with perpetual Diſorders, and with irreparable Detriment.

CHAP. XXIV.

Of the Miracles of Jeſus.

THE Miracles which the bleſſed Jeſus wrought whilſt he was upon Earth, make another conſiderable part of the Hiſtory of his Life, and ſhew the divine Authority of the Author. For ſo it was, that when *John Baptiſt* for the ſatisfaction of his doubting Diſciples ſent them to Jeſus to know, whether he was the Meſſiah, or him that ſhould come? we find our Saviour appeal'd to his Works, and by them vouch'd his Authority. *Go that way,* (ſaith he) *and tell what ye have ſeen and heard; how that the Blind ſee, the Lame walk, the Lepers are cleanſed, the Dead are rais'd,* &c. By ſuch like works as theſe he proves the Truth of his Commiſſion; for Miracles being the effects of God's immediate and extraordinary Power, it is impoſſible he ſhould put this broad Seal to the Confirmation of a Lie.

Luke 7.

As

As for those *Miranda* recorded in profane Stories, as the speaking of *Juno*'s Statue, and that of a Child of six Months old proclaimed Triumph in *Rome*, as also the *Augur*'s cutting a Whet-stone with a Razour, so much admired by *Tarquinius*, with other such like Prodigies of Fame amongst the Ancients; 'tis plain, they were no Miracles, being such as might easily be obtruded by Collusion, and lay not without the compass of Natural Agents. Of this kind were the wonders wrought by the Magicians under *Pharaoh*, as also those which are reported of *Appolonius* by *Philostratus*, and of one *Zedekiah* a Jew in the time of *Lewis* the Emperour. All which for the Devil to have effected, either by Local Motion, by the applying of Actives to Passives, or by making some Alteration upon the Medium, or in the sight of the Beholder, was not a matter of any great difficulty. I know that Heathen Stories are famous for the Miracles of *Vespasian*, but when we call to mind that intimate familiarity which was betwixt the Emperour and *Apollonius Tyanæus*, who was with him also at *Alexandria* when he wrought his Cure, 'tis more than probable, that what's reported of him in this Nature, was but a piece of Artifice and Delusion; or, admitting it to have been real, yet

Vide Mart. Derio. Mag. Disq. l. 1. c. 4. quæs. 4.

yet was it not without the compass of Natural Causes. For *Tacitus* tells us, that when *Vespasian* ask'd his Physicians whether such defects were recoverable by humane means; they answer'd, they were, might convenient remedies be applied. *Spartianus* relates the like of *Hadrean* in restoring a blind Man to sight; and yet in the same place he tells us, that *Marius Maximus* an Historiographer of good Credit affirm'd it to be Fictitious. As for *Mahomet*, he saught not to confirm his Doctrine by Miracles, but by the Sword; but of him by and by.

Tac. lib. 4. Histor.

Spartian. in Hadr.

Those then are truly Miracles which cannot be produc'd by the Natural Power of any created Agent, or be obtruded on us by Imposture; and of this kind were those urg'd by our Saviour to *John*'s Disciples: For who ever heard of any that raised the Dead, and gave sight to the Blind? And let me speak it with Reverence, that had our Saviour mention'd any other Miracles, as his turning of Water into Wine, his walking upon the Sea, his feeding of 5000 with a few Loaves and the like; they could never have won Men over to a belief of that for which they were brought in Proof, even that Christ was the promised Messiah. For albeit, such Miracles were true, because impossible to be produc'd

duc'd by the Immediate virtue of any ſecond Cauſe whatſoever; nevertheleſs they could not have been convincing, it being poſſible for the Devil to counterfeit the like by a quick Tranſportation and Exchange of Bodies, or by a ſpeedy ſupply of new Matter; in which caſe it would be very difficult to diſcern the true Miracles from thoſe which were falſe and ſpecious. What is reported of *Simon Magus*, may ſerve for an Inſtance: He could appear flying in the Air, he could transform himſelf into divers Shapes, and turn Stones into Bread, which no doubt was done by the Devil in imitation of Chriſt's Miracles laſt mention'd, not by any true converſion, but by a ſudden and inſenſible conveyance of one body into the room of another.

The Efficacy of Chriſt's Miracles for the conviction of Atheiſts, is ſufficiently prov'd from the credit of the Reporters of them, the holy Apoſtles: That the Apoſtles indeed did tranſmit the Memory of them to future Ages, by their writings contained in the New Teſtament, is prov'd upon that more than Moral, certainly we have from Univerſal Tradition; and that they made no falſe Reports in this matter, is prov'd alſo beyond all diſpute in their infinite ſufferings for the belief of Chriſt, and from the miraculous ſucceſs their Doctrines found

found in obliging the whole World to follow their belief. The evidence of which Truth is as clear and convincing as ever any thing ſince the firſt Creation, as will appear more fully in the following Chapter.

CHAP. XXV.

Of the Effects wrought by Chriſt, and his Religion.

ANother General Argument to prove the Truth of Jeſus's Meſſiah-ſhip, as alſo the Verity of his Religion, is taken from the Events and Conſequences of the Chriſtian Faith, in the conqueſt it made over all the World, and this in two Reſpects; firſt over Devils, ſecond over Men. And firſt for Devils; Thoſe many famous or rather infamous Oracles, to which the Heathens for ſo many Ages had recourſe, and paid ſo great a Veneration, about the time of Chriſt's appearance, began univerſally to ſink and diminiſh in their Credit, and a little after become utterly abandon'd. That renowned one of *Apollo* at *Delphos*, was mute in the Times of *Juvenal*, and as for the others of Greece, as of *Amphiaraus*, *Elæa*,

Juvenal Satyr. 6.

Elæa, *Tegyra*, as also that of *Ammon*, so much celebrated amongst the Heathens; *Plutarch* complains, that they were all Dumb, only that at *Sebaclin* in *Bæotia* was Vocal, the rest to his great astonishment and sorrow, were either silent or prostrate on the Ground. No less remarkable is that known Passage of the same Author in the account he gives of *Epitherses*, who sailing near the Isles call'd the *Echinades*, heard a doleful Voice, as did all the rest who were about him, crying from the shore: *The great* Pan *was dead*. Whereupon follow'd a most doleful noise of Harlings and Groans; which thing when told *Tiberius*, he was much amaz'd, consulting the Philosophers there in *Rome*, who this *Pan* should be: Now 'twas under *Tiberius* that Christ was crucified. Plutarch lib. de defect. Oracul.

The other great Conquest which the Christian Religion made, was over Men, and they were of two sorts, Jews and Gentiles: As for the Jews, 'tis notorious with what malicious Calumnies, with what secret Conspiracies, with what open Tumults, with what perfidious Subornations, with what indefatigable Travels, and with what a constant and universal Concurrence they all endeavour'd the suppression and utter destruction of a few followers of Jesus. They stirr'd up the People every where,

not

not only in their own Teritories, but in all the adjacent Countrys round about, to lay Hands upon the poor Disciples, and their Friends. One while they endeavour'd to expose them to the Sword of the *Romans*, as Adherents to some new King; other whiles they charg'd them with Blasphemy, and as Prevaricators from their Law, and every where they were branded with Ignominy, and with the dangerous Characters of Factions and Seditions. This we find lively painted out by St. *Luke* in the *Acts of the Apostles*, and more particularly exemplified in St. *Paul*, of whose Character and Deportment 'twill not be unseasonable to take a transient veiw.

This blessed Instrument of the World's Conversion, was at first, we read, a most violent persecutour of the Christians, and was so much the more dangerous; forasmuch as he was not animated by private Animosity, or with a wanton humour of seeking applause by a popular Zeal, but by a serious persuasion and conviction of Conscience, that what he did, was for the Glory of Almighty God: And certainly when Men are once of this Persuasion, whether their belief be Orthodox or Erroneous, they cannot choose but raise great Commotions, and will combate with insuperable

perable difficulties. And thus it was with this blessed Apostle, till such time as he was miraculously converted, and with the change of his Name, which happened a little after, was dignified with a nobler change of his Nature, and of a ravenous Wolf became a vigilant and painfull Sheepherd. With what popular Clamours and open Violence did the Jews seek him every where to suppress this Convert? With what hellish Plots and Snares did they labour every where to suppress him? How often was he whipt and scourg'd to the utmost severity of the Law, against which he never offended? His Sufferings are amply describ'd by himself, in his 2 Epist to the *Corinth.* c. 11, which Epistle was wrote about the Year of Christ 58, and consequently contain'd nothing of the Persecutions and Afflictions of his following Life for eleven Years after. With what indefatigable labour did he plant Religion almost in all Regions of the known World at that time? What Hardships and Miseries did he suffer from Reproach, and Calumnies, from Hunger and Cold, and from Watchings and weary Travels. He was every where invested with Perils, assaulted with Temptations, and besieg'd with Enemies; all which was nothing to the Anxieties and Troubles of his Soul for the concerns and welfare of all the

the Churches; writing instructive and consolating Epistles every where, conforming himself to the necessities of others, and as much as in him lay, transferring the burden of all the Christian World upon his own shoulders, and willing to be made an Anathema himself for the good and safety of others, which he labour'd to promote by Preaching, Praying, Disputing, Writing, and Exemplary living in all quarters of the World. With what noble courage did he always meet the Persecuting Jews? with what prudential conduct did he avoid their Treacheries, and with what solid Reasons did he combate their Errours? With what boldness of address did he dispute with the Philosophers of *Athens*, the only Masters of the World for the Acts of Argument and Judicature? Where ever he went, he made his Conquests over the Judgments and Wills of others, as well as over his own Passions. His own dangers and difficulties were the least part of his Trouble; the wellfare of others was that which fill'd his Mind with an Apostolick Solicitude. Let any Man judge of a Person in his circumstances, and who held such a vast correspondence with all parts of the new converted World, which was then oppugn'd every where; what infinite Letters and Addresses must be made to him from all places

places, to all which he was oblig'd to answer; whether they concern'd Cases of Conscience amongst those, especially of the Circicumsion, or whether they concern'd Church Doctrines and Constitutions, or the behaviour of the Primitive Christians, under so many Temptations and Difficulties as occurr'd every where? What continuances of Adversaries, Spiritual and Temporal, what Sollicitations from Friends, what vast designs for the Eternal wellfare of Mankind employ'd his Thoughts, and fill'd all the spacious Rooms and secret Recesses of his Soul? What triumphing over the blandishments and discouragements of the World, over Crowns and Empires, over Honours, Riches, Strength, Wisdom and Eloquence with whatsoever else might influence a wordly Genius; he erects the Standard of the Cross, declaring openly to the Learned and Illiterate, to the Noble and Obscure; that he came not with the Artifice of enticing Words, nor the Inventions of humane Knowledge, but with simplicity of Conceptions and Expressions to Preach Christ crucified. This he demonstrated with an undoubted Courage, in his Defence or Apology for the Christian Faith at *Cæsarea*; as also against the Defamations of the high Priests, and the chiefest of the

the Jewish Nation, though strengthned with the plausible Insinuations, and virulent Invectives of their Orator, *Tertullus*. All which things were transacted in a most publick Audience, before *Felix*, *Festus*, and *King Agrippa*, and after many difficulties of a dangerous Voyage, he had the honour in the last place to plead his Cause more than once before the Terrour of Mankind, the most bloody *Nero*; from whom also, as a just Reward of his cause and courage, he received a Laurel far more noble than what adorn'd *Cæsar*'s Brow, even that glorious one of Martyrdom.

His defence doubtless was much the same with what he made before *Festus* and *Agrippa*; however it has pleased Almighty God to suffer such a noble Monument of Primitive Glory to be lost, as are also many other Illustrious Transactions of the holy Apostles: Nevertheless, divers of his Epistles, which by God's good Providence are deliver'd to us by the Church, shew sufficiently with what a Spirit he was animated. They are Argumentative and profound in the Doctrinal part: His precepts carry the Majesty of Oracles, and yet do they flow every where with the sweet Streams of Tenderness and Compassion; like Lightning melting the Steel within, even the resisting parts, or the most obdurate

rate heart without hurting the Body; we find him every where glorying with a Seraphick Charity, more chaſte and laſting than any Veſtal Fire, and more ſacred than the Flames of Altars, burning always without being conſum'd. In ſhort, we find him carying always in a mortified Body the Characters of a crucified Chriſt, but of a glorified Jeſus in the elevation of his Spirit, which he every where diſcovers both in the perpetual Activity, and (if I may ſpeak it without a Soleciſm) in the perpetual Tranquillity alſo of his Mind. The ſame divine Vertues which adorn'd the Apoſtleſhip of St. *Paul*, are remarkable alſo in St. *Peter*, and in the reſt of Chriſt's Diſciples, whoſe Conqueſts we are in the next place to conſider in reſpect of the Pagan World.

As for the *Romans*, whoſe Government at the time of Chriſt's appearance, comprehended all the known and civiliz'd World; let us ſee in what a State and Poſture they then ſtood. Their Empire was then at the higheſt Pitch, and in its greateſt Power, Extent and Luſtre, and greater far than ever any Empire before or ſince. *Rome*, the capital City of this vaſt Body, upon a Survey made by *Claudius*, (call'd a *Luſtrum*,) containd no leſs than ſix Millions, nine hundred forty four thou-

Tacit. Lib. II. Hiſt.

ſand Souls, as *Tacitus* reports. Humane Arts and Learning then flouriſh'd moſt; then liv'd the acuteſt Philoſophers, and the greateſt Bigots of Heatheniſm. Their Augurs and Flamines, with ſuch like Inſtruments of their ſuperſtitious Worſhip, fill'd an infinite number of Colleges, and abounded every where. There was neither Power nor Zeal wanting in the Emperours and Senate to defend their Rites; neither was their Torments wanting to be inflicted on thoſe who ſhould oppoſe them; in a word, never were the Powers of Earth, or rather of Hell in a better poſture for combat. In oppoſition to this great and formidable Armado, they appear on the other ſide a few deſpicable Fiſhermen, and Illiterate Mechanicks; mere Idiots in the eye of the World, and deſtitute of Friends, Learning, and Policy; without Arms, or Money in their Scrips, without change of Apparel, and with a ſtaff only in their Hands, half naked and forlorn: This, at firſt appearance, looks more fabulous than a Romance, but that the Caſe thus ſtood is clear and indiſputable.

Now that ſuch a few humble and ill accounted Champions ſhould enter the Liſts againſt ſuch Enemies as are now deſcrib'd, was a Prodigy beyond Example; and yet they did ſo; and with what ſucceſs we ſhall

ſee

ſee preſently. Twelve poor Diſciples, with a few Converts, did attack this great and adverſe party, not by keeping themſelves united into a cloſe body, but by ſcattering themſelves through all quarters of the Univerſe. They erected their Standard (the ever glorious Banner of the Croſs) even in *Rome* it ſelf, the centre of Pagan Rites, and this too in the Reign of the moſt debauch'd and bloody Tyrant that ever ſate on the Throne. They preach'd up Jeſus, who was crucified and buried, and was with-drawn from them as to all ſenſible appearance: They taught that the way to Happineſs was by Suffering, to be Glorious by enduring Ignominy, to be Rich by ſelling all, to obtain Liberty by Bonds and Impriſonments, and to be Conquerours by being Subdu'd and Perſecuted. They taught alſo, That Men were as accountable for their ſinfull Thoughts as for their Actions; and that every extravagance of deſire was to be reſiſted: To all which they were to join Faſtings and Watchings, Alms and Prayers; and that Cold, Nakedneſs, Hunger and Thirſt, Perſecutions, and even Death it ſelf were to be endur'd chearfully; and all this and much more for the ſake of that Jeſus who was Crucified, and from whom alſo they were to expect their Reward in another Life.

Such Doctrine, deliver'd from ſuch a ſort of Men, one would think to be mighty plauſible to convince the proud Philoſophers; as alſo the haughty and imperious *Romans*, who breath'd nothing but Conqueſts and Triumphs: And ſtill the undertaking ſeems more impoſſible if we conſider, with what Arms and Weapons the *Romans* made their Defence, *viz.* with Swords and Creſts, with Mines and Priſons, with wild Beaſts and Racks, and with all the Artillery of Subtilty and Cruelty. And yet notwithſtanding all theſe Difficulties on one ſide, and on the other, theſe few Diſciples of Jeſus enter'd upon their Warfare; they brake through all diſaſters, which oppos'd them, by withſtanding all the diſputes of Philoſophers, all the Placarts of the Senate, all the Priſons and Tortures of the Officers, with infinite other hardſhips, ſtill attending their Buſineſs by Baptizing, Preaching, and Praying, and at length Seal'd the Truth of their Belief and Doctrine with their Blood; an Eternal proof indeed of its Truth. For though Men may lye ſometimes for Gain, yet we never heard of any, much leſs ſo many and for ſo many Ages, who would perſevere in a lye that they might be Miſerable; and when they might enjoy all the Comforts of life by following Truth, would volun-

voluntarily plunge themſelves into a train of perpetual Calamities, both in this World and that to come, by aſſerting falſhood.

And indeed, as the natural Weakneſs and the ſupernatural Courage and conſtancy of the Abettours of Chriſtianity heard its Truth; ſo alſo that this Truth was of a Divine Extraction and Vertue, is farther demonſtrable from the Poſſeſſion it got in the Minds of the moſt prejudic'd Men over their Judgments, Wills and Affections, and contrary to all humane Intereſts and natural Inclinations whatſoever. Whereas the Doctrine of *Plato*, after ſo long a continuance, and even in the Infancy of Chriſtianity, flouriſhing in thoſe great Maſters of Reaſon, *Plotirus*, *Lorgirus* and *Porphyrus*, could never ſo inſinuate into the Miracles and Manners of Men, as to draw any one Village throughout the World unto its Principles, and make them live after the Preſcripts and Rules of its Philoſophy.

On the other hand, the Progreſs of Chriſtianity was ſo Univerſal and Early, that even in the days of St. *Paul*, his Doctrine had converted ſome of *Cæſar*'s houſhold, *Phil.* 4. as in the beginning of *Trajan*'s Reign, we read of *Flavia Domiſilla*, a Perſon of the imperial Blood, who with her two Eunuchs, *Nereus* and *Achilleus*, made

her Blood more noble yet, by the Effusion of it in Martyrdom; and but four years after, *Pliny* going over *Proconsul*, to the Province of *Bithynia*, found such a Multitude of Christians in it, that he was obliged to consult the Emperour what to doe in the matter, not daring to draw the Sword against all at once; and so fast did their number grow, maugre all the Terrours and Efforts of Persecution, as made *Turtullianus* in his Apologetick to the *Roman* Nobles say by a word of Triumph, We have fill'd the Cities, the Isles, the Castles, the Councils, the Camps, the Corporations, your Tribes, your Palaces, your Courts, and your Senate; we have left you nothing to your selves but the Temples. And thus Christianity went on still, acquiring strength by its Progression, till at length in defiance of all the Instruments of Wit and Cruelty, it subdu'd Principalities and Powers, and chang'd the Laws of Empire; it subverted their Religion, and cast their false Gods and Idolatrous Temples to the Ground; and as a perpetual Monument of their Victory, it made them throw away their Lawrels, abjure their Triumphs, and in the Crowns they wore, erect the Crowns upon the Globe, the Figure or Symbol of the World they pretended to command, and which they ever acknowledg'd to be in subjection to the Cross.

Plin. l. 10 Epist. 97. Apologet. cap. 37.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXVI.

Of the Mahometan Religion.

THE Mahometan Superſtition makes the laſt Branch of reveal'd (or of a pretendedly reveal'd) Religion; this falls in moſt opportunely to be ſpoken to, as being in appearance the greateſt Objection that can poſſibly be made againſt the Truth of Chriſtianity, which notwithſtanding when impartialy and throughly conſider'd, will afford us one of the greateſt Arguments to prove its Divine Authority; upon which conſideration, I have reſerv'd the handlings of this Point to the laſt place; for as much as *Mahomet* is the greateſt and moſt Mortal Enemy, which hitherto hath appear'd againſt it, and therefore the fitteſt to follow it in its Triumph.

In the Mahometan Religion then, there are two things, at firſt ſight, which occurr to our Conſideration, *viz.* Its Duration, and its Extent; as for its Duration, it has flouriſhed, or rather infected the World for above a thouſand years; and then for its Extent, although its Original was from an obſcure Impoſture, yet in leſs than Seventy Years, the Diſciples of this Sect,

under the name of *Saracens*, had diffus'd themſelves over *Armenia*, *Perſia*, *Paleſtine*, *Egypt*, *Lybia*, and almoſt all *Africa*; and for ſome Ages paſt, even to this very day, they poſſeſs the largeſt and nobleſt parts of the habitable World in the Perſian and Ottoman Empires, the better part of *Judea*; as alſo all *Tartary*, with three quarters alſo of *Africa*; ſo that the Creſcent ſeems in a great Meaſure to verifie that arrogant Prediction of growing greater and greater, *donec totum impleat orbem.* Now that ſuch a Peſtilent Sect ſhould ſo long triumph over, and almoſt extenuate the Chriſtian Religion, and ſpread its Roots and Branches wider alſo, is a point which at the firſt ſight may ſeem to ſtagger us; but how formidable ſoever this Scandal may appear to a young Believer, we ſhall find no great danger in it, if we conſider,

First, the Circumſtances of the Age when this Innovation firſt began. It was about the Year 630, and in the Reign of *Heraclius* the Emperour, that *Mahomet* is ſaid to have departed this Life, before which time almoſt the ſpace of 200 Years; the *Vandals* had over-run almoſt all *Africa*, a Countrey always famous for Wild Beaſts and Monſters; ſo that almoſt all that vaſt Tract or Region being overcome with Barbarity and Ignorance, the Soil ſeem'd ready

ready prepar'd for Weeds to grow in; to which conſideration we may add that alſo of the *Eaſtern* Church, over-run with Niſtorianiſm, and contending with the *Weſtern* for the Primacy. All this the Impoſtour underſtood very well, as alſo that Ignorance naturally leads Men to Innovation: And as the ſtate and circumſtances of the *7th.* Century ſuited well with the Genius and deſign of ſuch a Prophet, ſo may we obſerve alſo the like Diſpoſition and Confluence of Cauſes in the ſucceeding Ages to propagate and enlarge the ſame. For the *Hunns*, *Goths*, *Vandals*, (whoſe uncouth Names are of harſh and barbarous ſound,) ſtill thronging in upon all quarters of the Empire, diſturb'd the repoſe and courſe of things; whilſt the greater Prelates contending with one another, and purſuing their ancient Quarrels about Precedency, and entring into new ones with the ſecular Power, about Superiority and Rights of Inveſtiture; all Religion was in a manner degenerated into Emulation, Faction, and Superſtition. By this means, I ſay, the Mahometan Doctrine advanc'd apace, and the Princes who where of it, under the Titles of *Caliphes* and *Sultans*, became formidable: Whereupon the Chriſtian Princes of the *Weſt*, finding the *Eaſtern* either immers'd in Idleneſs and Luxury,

Luxury, or unable to withſtand the Inundation of this Sect, enter'd into a League call'd the *Holy war*, which for ſome time repell'd the Progreſs of the Mahometan Invaſions, till domeſtick Quarrels and jealouſies, together with Self-intereſt, made the Europeans abandon ſuch a glorious deſign, and leave all as a Prey to the Ottoman Uſurpers, which ended in the total Ruine of the *Eaſtern* Empire.

The next thing to be taken notice of, is the Ottoman Empire it ſelf, which has for a long time been the moſt potent, and is at this day doubtleſs the greateſt in the World; if we conſider the extent of its Dominions. It is a vaſt Branch, or rather the very Body or Trunck of the Mahometan Religion; and as being the moſt bigotted and zealous in the Propagation of the ſame, it will not be improper to make ſome Reflections upon their Conduct in this particular.

One of the chiefeſt Policies, or the grand *Arcanum* of the Ottomans, is to keep the common People in Ignorance, and to reſolve the Expoſition of all difficult Caſes, and the final Deciſion of their Controverſies, into the Right Reverend the *Muſti*, who in all matters of conſequence depends upon the infallible Oracle the Grand Signiour. To this end and purpoſe they diſcoun-

countenance and prohibit all Learning, eſpecially Controverſial; for ſhould they attain to the underſtanding of Greek and Latin, they would quickly read the behaviour and belief of others in the Tranſlations of former Ages. and by the Helps and Methods which they find in ſuch Monuments of Antiquity, they would attain alſo to the Art of Reaſoning, which would draw them inſenſibly to examine their Religion, and diſcover the groſs Abſurdities and Contradictions of their *Alcoran*. For ſo it is, that their Religion will not endure the ſtreſs of a Diſputation, upon which account we find, that there was never one of this Perſuaſion of what continuance, and how wide ſoever it is, or hath been, that did ever offer to defend it by Argument.

Their next Policy is, to probibit the uſe of Printing; For ſhould this get place amongſt them, new Opinions would quickly be ſpread abroad, which would not only expoſe their Superſtition, but make great Convulſions in the very body of their Government. 'Twas ſubtilly therefore done of one of their *Kaimacans*, who when a Printer came to *Conſtantinople* with his printing Inſtruments, and offer'd to publiſh ſome Books very cheap, caus'd him preſently to be ſtrangled, and all his Inſtruments

ments to be burnt; pretending, that 'twas unjuſt, that one Man for a little gain ſhould take the Bread out of the Mouths of thouſands of Families who liv'd by Writing. A plauſible pretenſe indeed, though the true reaſon of this ſeverity was that which I am now diſcourſing of, *viz.* to prevent the Innovations which a liberty of Publication would infallibly introduce.

Another Policy of the Mahometan Religion, conſiſts in their abſtaining from all acquaintance with Foreign Nations. They never Travel themſelves, upon any account, not even upon the account of Traffick, into any Chriſtian Territories; by which means they are moſt groſly ignorant of what is taught or done in Foreign Kingdoms. All the knowledge they have is from Renegades and Fugitives, which cannot deſerve much Credit, and in Religious Matters is totally inſignificant: And as for thoſe who viſit their Countries, they are but few, there being no improvement to be made by an Ingenious and Induſtrious Traveller, which may compenſate the Riſque and Expence; all Foreigners being generally lookt upon by the Turks as Spies, and are therefore under a watchfull Eye and in Danger. To tamper therefore with them in matters of Religion, would prove Pernicious and Fatal: And as for our Merchants

chants, who reſort to them upon the account of Commerce, their buſineſs is Trade and Gain; nor are they admitted but to a very ſmall acquaintance, and that only with Perſons of the meaner Quality, and ſuch with whom their Traffick lies.

The laſt Turkiſh Policy, and which ſeems alſo to contribute much to the Preſervation of their Religion, is their conſtant adherence to their more ancient Habits, Cuſtoms, and Manners of Living; ſo that whoſoever does converſe with them, muſt in a great Meaſure conform in theſe particulars, unleſs he has a Mind to be expos'd to Contempt, or perhaps Dangers. This one particular, how trivial ſoever it may ſeem, cannot but create in theſe Muſſelmen a wonderfull Opinion of themſelves, and a kind of ſcorn and diſlike of whatſoever diſagrees with them; and indeed, Inconſtancy in ſuch matters cannot but argue much Levity, and we may obſerve our ſelves what Prejudice may ariſe from Cuſtom. For ſhould a Man walk the Streets with a Sugar-Loaf-Hat, with a ſlaſht Doublet, and ruffling Ribbons about the waſte and knees of his Breeches, and with party colour'd Stockings, and the like, he would be lookt upon as a Fool or Madman; and yet ſuch a Garb twenty five years ſince was very

very agreeable and Court-like, how ridiculous ſoever it appears at preſent. The ſame Judgment may paſs in another Age upon our preſent Modes, which ſeem ſo decent and uſefull: So much does Cuſtom render things agreeable and familiar. In ſhort, that the conſtancy of the Mahometans in their falſe Worſhip, does not proceed from the Nature of their Religion, but from the forementiond Cauſes, is moſt demonſtrable from thoſe of the Greek Church; who though they are in themſelves the moſt unſetled in their Opinions, and the moſt eaſily won to any Perſuaſion; yet in *Muſcovy*, where they live under a Government, which neither Countenances Learning, Printing, Travel, nor Foreign Modes, we find them as ſetled and inflexible as the Turks, and altogether as groſs and ignorant.

Theſe are ſome of the Acts and Methods by which the Turks preſerve their own Religion; and here it will not be improper to take a Tranſitory view of one point of Conduct, by which they ſo much weaken the Chriſtians. They do not make their attempts on it by open Perſecution; this would carry a ſhow of too much Barbarity, and make the Sufferers paſs for Martyrs, which would not only beget Compaſſion in the Spectatours, but a Jealouſie

louſie alſo in them, that their own Religion was not of a Divine Extraction, which requir'd ſuch bloody Executions for its defence; from hence naturally would ſpring a Curioſity of enquiring into the Nature, both of one and of the other Religion, which could not but bring over great numbers of Proſelites to the Chriſtian, and which could not but be attended alſo with important Alteration. No no, they proceed another way, *viz.* by a ſort of Toleration, which is nothing but a more lingring and artificial Cruelty, making Men to taſte gradually that bitterneſs of which a ſudden blow would take away all Senſe, and perhaps all Fears. They ſuffer the Chriſtians, I ſay, to enjoy the Liberty of their Religion; but then by their exactions in Tribute, both of their Children and Eſtates, by barring them from all Offices, either of Credit or Profit, by remiſneſs of Juſtice on their behalf, and by treating them frequently, with terms of Ignominy and Scorn, and by expoſing them to the right worſhipfull the *Mobb*; they ſo enervate and debaſe their Spirits, as makes them very degenerate, enduing their habituated Slavery without reſiſtance; and with ſuch kind of Methods as theſe, ſome of our Europeans are not unacquainted. An open Perſecution is like cutting down a

Tree

Tree at the Butt, which makes a great noiſe in the fall, and leaves a ghaſtly gap behind; when yet after ſome little time, there ſhall ſprout out innumerable ſhoots and ſuckers from the Roots of the mangled Trunk, which will not be deſtroy'd but with great Labour and Difficulty. Whereas the other Method is like that of well drawing the Nouriſhment from the Root, and by removing the Earth which covers it, by which means it becomes naked, and lies expos'd to the Extremities of Weather, to Cold, and to the burning Sun, and to all intemperance of the Air, which in ſhort time will make the Tree wither away, or continue in ſuch a languiſhing Condition, as ſhall give but little Umbrage, nor afford any ſhelter under its Branches.

Having taking a ſhort veiw of the Mahometan Methods for the defence of their own Religion, the next general conſideration will be that of its Author, as alſo of the Nature and conſideration of its Doctrines. Its Authour *Mahomet*, an *Iſhmaelite* by Extraction, and a Nation of *Arabia*, was by profeſſion a Carrier, and being maſter of Camels did follow Traffick, as 'twas the Practice anciently of the *Iſhmaelites* or *Arabians*, and is in uſe amongſt them to this very day, in great companies of Mules and Camels, call'd, *Caravans*.

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The Impoſture being one of a ſubtle wit, as are generally Men of this Profeſſion and Countrey, ſoon grew Rich and powerfull too: For receiving Pay under the Emperour *Heraclius* at ſuch time as the *Arabian* Army revolted; he was not wanting to make his Advantage by heading a Company of his perfidious Countrymen, pretending belike to free his Country from Superſtition and Slavery, and to ſecure their Lives and Properties: By theſe means we may eaſily gueſs that he was Idoliz'd by the *Arabian* Rable, and ſoon became conſiderable. And becauſe pretenſion of Religion has been ever lookt upon as a fair Cloak for Rebellion, and the fitteſt Inſtrument to puzzle the Populace, the Impoſtour plaid the Zealot, and ſets up for an Enthuſiaſt, or ſome divinely inſpir'd Prophet.

The circumſtances of that Age, as we have always noted, did highly favour his deſign; for we do not find that Chriſtianity made any entrance into *Arabia*, only the *Neſtorians*, who ſwarm'd about *Alexandria*, had ſpread themſelves into theſe parts; as likewiſe the Jews, upon the account of Traffick. The Impoſtour therefore, like a true *Trimmer* or *Latitudinarian*, acted the part of a moderate Reconciler, by forging a Religion, or pacifick Comprehenſion of all diſſenting Parties. To gain the

Jews, he forbad Swines Fleſh, retain'd Circumciſion, aboliſh'd Images, extolls *Moſes* and the Prophets, and every where magnifies the Old Teſtament. To allure the Orthodox Chriſtians, he magnifies Jeſus Chriſt alſo, allowing him to be ſent from Heaven, and to be conceiv'd on the Virgin *Mary*, whom alſo he highly honours and eſteems, as an immaculate Virgin, both before and after her deliverance. He taught alſo, that Jeſus Chriſt came to inſtruct the World, and left it a holy Law or Rule in his Goſpel, or the New Teſtament; and in the laſt place, to draw over the *Neſtorians* to his Belief, he taught that Jeſus Chriſt was not true God, nor the Son of God.

And becauſe the Myſteries of the Chriſtian Religion might ſeem hard of digeſtion to new Converts, he expung'd the Doctrines of the Trinity, as alſo of the Crucifixion and Reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt out of his Alcoran. He took no notice likewiſe of the Sacraments, of the Doctrines of Juſtification by the Merits and Sufferings of Jeſus Chriſt, nor of Original Sin, and the like. And to ſecure the ſenſual and voluptuous to his party, he expung'd the Doctrines of Chriſt, touching ſelf Denial, of returning Good for Evil, of loving our Enemies, of ſuffering Reproaches and Perſecutions with thankfulneſs

neſs, and of ſubduing our Paſſions, and of abſtaining from the very thoughts of ſin; in lieu of which ſevere Doctrines, he allow'd his Proſelites to have many Wives, and as many Concubines as they could maintain. He allowed them alſo, or rather commanded them to be reveng'd of their Enemies, and after this life ended, promis'd them the fruition of Women, brave Ox-ey'd Women, of pleaſant Gardens, and Fruits, with ſuch like Blandiſhments as might prove fuel to their Luſts, in the next life.

Nor did his Artifice reſt here; for being jealous that his Novelties could not eaſily gain credit upon the ſcore of their own ſufficiency, he pretended that all was reveal'd to him by the Angel *Gabriel*; to countenance which Impoſture, his diſeaſe (which was the Falling-ſickneſs) was of wonderfull advantage; and we know the time (and God grant we may not know it again) when a black or white Cap, and a Handkerchief knit about the Neck with a Slip not, accompanied with a hallowed Cough and a twarying Noſe, were the infallible marks of a Son, or rather of a Father of Grace. But to return to *Mahomet* (where we left him) in his fits of Trembling, out of which, as out of a Trance or Ecſtaſie, being a little recover'd, with a ghaſtly, pale, and meigre Countenance, and half diſtract-

ed, he vented his Blaſphemies and Nonſenſe, in abrupt Sentences, and with a hideous Voice of denouncing Hell and Damnation, to ſuch as did not fear God and keep his Commandments, which were ſent to them by his Prophet *Mahomet*; by which we may judge readily of what Antiquity and Extraction the Quakers are, who (to give them their due) are much ancienter we ſee than many of their fellow Sectaries.

But we muſt not yet take leave of *Mahomet*, who of a Captain of Mules became a Colonel or Brigadier of Light Horſe, and at laſt a great General, by revolting from his Prince and Maſter; like another *Oliver*, he made uſe of both Swords, the Temporal, and that of the Spirit; this being the certain Method by which all Uſurpers do advance themſelves, *viz.* to join the Seducer to the Rebel; ſo that had his Highneſs the late Uſurper liv'd in *Arabia*, in the time of *Heraclius* the Emperour, the impartial Reader muſt agree with me in my Opinion, that he would have made an excellent true *Mahomet*, or had *Mahomet* liv'd in *England* in the Reign of *Charles* the Firſt, that he would have made as good a Lord Protectour.

As for the *Alcoran* or the reveal'd Law of *Mahomet*, it is divided into Chapters under

der certain ridiculous Titles, which have not the leaſt affinity with the Contents, as the Verſes or Sentences of the Contents have not the leaſt Connexion with one another. Every Chapter is prefac'd with the Name of God, all Gracious and Merciful; but for the Contents of them, they are generally the ſame throughout, tending to denounce God's heavy Judgments on Infidels and Sinners, ſpeaking oft-times of Heaven, Hell, and a general Judgment. Good Works, ſuch as Alms, Faſtings, and Prayers, are every where commended and commanded; upon the whole it is nothing but a Hodg podg of Sentences, or the abrupt tranſports of a Frantick Spirit, which though inoffenſive many of them in themſelves, and pretending to promote vertue and a good life, yet being ſo often repeated, and without the leaſt connexion of matter, it quickly nauſeates, and carries not the leaſt appearance of a Collection or Body of Laws, being no better ſtuff than what any old intoxicated bigottiſt vents uſually in a religious Fury; ſo that the *Alcoran* may truly be ſaid to be as dry, incoherent, devious and dangerous, as the Sands of *Arabia* in which 'twas hatcht.

But that we may come nearer to our journeys end through this barren Deſart, let us compare the Life and Doctrine of

Jeſus with that of *Mahomet*. And here a ſacred horrour puts a kind of ſtop to my Pen, when I offer to compare, I ſay, two things ſo extreme as the holy Jeſus with the moſt impure Impoſtour. But ſince the Beauty of Light may without contradiction be illuſtrated by the gloming Nature of Darkneſs, and the Goodneſs of God may become more viſible by being oppos'd to the Deformity of the Devil; let us, I ſay, compare theſe two Prophets together.

First then, for the holy Jeſus, he tells his Followers; That he did not bear record of himſelf, but that the Works which he did teſtifie of him, to which he appeals, and of which we have ſpoken already. As for *Mahomet*, let us hear what he ſays of himſelf: "They will certainly cry out (ſays "he) that *Mahomet* dream'd and inven- "ted what he teacheth; that he is a Poet, "and that all is but Fiction; we will not "believe him unleſs he ſhew us ſome Mira- "cle, as did the Prophets of Old. To this Objection which *Mahomet* makes of himſelf, and againſt himſelf we may be ſure, what Anſwer does he give? Why truly, and very wiſely, he lets the Objection even ſhift for it ſelf as well as it can, running on at his old impertinent Career, and crying out; "We have deſtroyed many Towns, "becauſe its Inhabitants were Incredulous;

Alcoran cap. of the Prophets

those

"thoſe which we ſent before thee were "Men which were inſpir'd by us; demand "of them who were before you, and who "liv'd under the written Law, if you are "ignorant of it: They were Men who did "Eat, Drink, and were Mortal, we have "accompliſhed what we promis'd them, "and ſav'd them, together with other Be- "lievers, and have rooted out the unbe- "lievers; we have ſent you a Book to in- "ſtruct you, do you not underſtand how "many infidel Towns we have deſtroy'd, "and how many new Generations have "been eſtabliſh'd in their places, *&c.* a very fair and peſtilent Anſwer to his own Objection, and like the reſt of the Alcoran. There was one Miracle I confeſs father'd on him; how that once upon a Time, the Moon was cleft in twain, and fell down upon the Ground, whereupon *Mahomet* ran nimbly, and catching up the Peices before they crumbled into Bits, ſolder'd them together again, and ſent it up to Heaven whole and ſound as a Bell; a Miracle which no Man ſaw beſides the Authour of it, and ſerves only to convince his followers, that he was no other than a Lunatick.

In the next place, Jeſus Chriſt was a Perſon of a moſt pure and holy Life, as *Mahomet* himſelf confeſſeth, whilſt *Mahomet* owns himſelf in many places of the

Alcoran to have been a very leud, voluptuous, and luſtfull Perſon. Thirdly, the Doctrine of Jeſus Chriſt was this: Love your Enemies, entertain not a luſtfull Thought, ſuffer Reproaches thankfully, rejoice under Perſecutions and the like; the Doctrine of *Mahomet* is, Kill your Enemies, get as many Wives and Concubines as you can keep, &c. Fourthly, the Inſtruments which Jeſus made uſe of to propagate his Doctrine, were a few poor ſimple Fiſhermen, timorous and illiterate, without Friends, Money, or Intereſt: The Inſtrument which *Mahomet* had recourſe to, were Squadrons of Arm'd and Bloody *Arabians*. Fifthly, when Chriſt appear'd, the *Romans*, who oppos'd his Doctrine, were in their greateſt Glory for Learning, Number, and Strength; there was then the largeſt and the moſt powerfull Emperour the World ever knew, which made head againſt it; when *Mahomet* appear'd, the Empire was broken to pieces, and the Countrey he appear'd in was utterly void of all Learning, Knowledge, Humility and ſenſe of Chriſtianity, excepting a few Neſtorian Hereticks. Laſtly, Chriſt promis'd Salvation by dying and riſing again; *Mahomet* by fighting, promiſing alſo that he would come again to them a thouſand Years after his departure; but he was not

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ſo good as his word; in ſo much that the Mufti, finding the People much diſſatisfied, and ready to Mutiny about the Non-accompliſhment of this glorious Prediction, found this Artifice to appeaſe them; ſaying, That upon a more diligent peruſal of the Sacred Books, he diſcover'd a miſtake in the Figure, and ſo it was found to be 2000 and not 1000 Years before this moſt illuſtrious Propheſie ſhould be fullfill'd; which Cheat, ſo ſilly as it was, was ſufficient to appeaſe the deluded Rabble. From all theſe Inſtances it appears abundantly; that the great Succeſs in the Propagation of the *Mahometan* Religion, had its Birth and Progreſs from humane Artifice and Invention.

But here the *Mahometan* will reply; if Jeſus Chriſt were the Son of God, and came down from Heaven to Redeem the World from Errour and Eternal Miſery, how comes it to paſs, that he has ſuffer'd ſuch an Impoſtour as *Mahomet* to delude Mankind for above a thouſand Years, raviſhing his Spouſe the Church out of his Boſome, and making moſt direfull Butcheries on the Sons and Members of it, inſomuch that there is ſcarce one third left to Chriſt; ſo large and permanent are the acquiſitions of *Mahomet*. From whence 'twill follow; That Chriſt muſt either want Will or Power

Power to defend that Church, for whoſe ſake 'tis ſaid, that he came down from Heaven, and was incarnate, and ſuffered an Ignominious Death upon the Croſs, and that *Mahomet*, as one of greater Power and Vertue to defend his Doctrine, was no Impoſtour, but a true and glorious Prophet. A Diſcourſe like this, how Blaſphemous and Offenſive ſoever it may be to the Ears of a Chriſtian, muſt yet be ſuffer'd were I to diſpute with a *Mahometan*; and indeed, it is the only thing of moment which any of that Religion can ſuggeſt in favour of it, to which I anſwer.

Firſt, that the ſame Objection might be made againſt the Jewiſh Church of Old; for they were in compariſon of the Pagan World, not ſo much as one to a thouſand; alſo, they were frequently oppreſs'd by their Neighbours, and at laſt their Laws and Nation in a manner extinguiſh'd in the Babyloniſh Captivity. The Jewiſh Church indeed was a Type of the Chriſtian, and the Caſe the ſame in both: God's promiſes were always Conditional, there being requir'd Repentance, and Duties on Man's part, for failure whereof ſevere Judgments were ever denounc'd, and thus much *Mahomet* himſelf allows every where in his *Alcoran*. Now that there was ſuch a General decay of Piety and Chriſtian Vertue in theſe

theſe People, who now groan under the *Mahometan* Yoke, at ſuch time as they became its Vaſſals, is notoriouſly evident in all Monuments of Antiquity; nor does *Mahomet* promiſe Bleſſings and Mercies to his Followers, but upon ſuch Conditions as are before mention'd, *viz.* Beleif, Repentance, and Good-Works.

In the next place, that there ſhould be great Apoſtaſies from the Faith, and that there ſhould ariſe great Seducers, and falſe Prophets, or Antichriſts, who ſhould deceive many, and introduce New and Damnable Doctrines, was what Chriſt foretold, and caution'd thoſe who embrac'd his Doctrine, to beware of it: ſo that the event, is ſo far from weakning the Truth of the Chriſtian Religion, that it does fortifie the ſame, by the accompliſhment of what Jeſus fore-told.

In the third place, ſuch a Breach in the Chriſtian Body, is no diminution of Chriſt's Power and Goodneſs; the Church of Chriſt in this World, is in a ſtate Militant, expos'd to continual Fatigues and Dangers, and ſometimes to Defeats, and to Captivity; this is nothing, but what Chriſt alſo foretold in his Goſpel, and what he himſelf ſuffer'd. Now here indeed is the Power and Goodneſs of God made manifeſt, that, maugre all the Barbarity and Artifice of Turkiſh

Turkiſh Gorvernment, the number of Chriſtians throughout their Dominions, far exceeds that of thoſe who hold them in Subjection: Nor have the Turks introduc'd amongſt the Greeks any Doctrines of their own, which may poiſon the Chriſtian Faith; ſo that however their Temporal Eſtates may ſuffer by God's wonderfull Providence and Goodneſs, they are not in any ſubjection as to their Souls; all which ſerves to wean Men from the Love of this World, and to ſettle their thoughts upon a future State, which is indeed the grand Scope and Method of the Goſpel: And as this is the Method with the Church in general, ſo likewiſe is it with every true Chriſtian in particular; and although at firſt ſight, it may ſeem ſomething harſh, that Chriſt who came into the World to deſtroy the Works of the Devil, and to redeem Men from Sin, ſhould notwithſtanding, ſuffer the ſame Devil to tempt us to ſin, and to raviſh infinite numbers of Souls daily out of the Arms of the Church; yet even in this particular, he veriſies his own Doctrine, for Eternal Happineſs is called a Crown: Now a Crown or Garland, through all Antiquity, was ever held a Military Reward, ſuch were their Civil, Moral, and other Crowns, ſo famous amongſt the Ancients; ſo that the very Reward does ſuppoſe a Victory, and

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Victory a Fight, and Fight an Enemy. Conformable hereunto the Apoſtle tells us, that we wraſtle not with Fleſh and Blood, that is, with our own ſenſual Appetites and Paſſions; but with Principalities and Powers, and ſpiritual Wickedneſſes in high Places; that is, with Devils who yet retain ſome kind of Government, and are in Subordination to one another, reſembling the Hierarchy of the bleſſed Angels, which are deſcribed alſo by the like Characters of Thrones Dominions, Principalities, and Powers, and are always at hand to relieve and defend the Elect againſt Temporal Dangers, and the Aſſaults of thoſe black Legions, as is every where moſt abundantly reveal'd in Scripture. Now if Men for a corruptible Crown venture ſo much, he certainly does not deſerve one which is Eternal and Incorruptible, who will not ſuffer hardſhip, and combate the Enemies who oppoſe him. Nor has Chriſt left the Members of his Church abandon'd and deſtitute, for beſides the aſſiſtance of the bleſſed Angels, the aſſiſtance of his Sacraments, together with his own Example, Precepts, and Promiſes, he has for our farther Encouragement, promiſs'd us the aſſiſtance of his Holy Spirit, to adorn us with many ſingular Graces, and to direct his Church into the way of Truth and Holineſs: To all which,

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whoſoever has a true regard, and lives a vertuous Life, cannot but have a ſollid aſſurance of being eternally happy.

In the laſt place, the progreſs which the *Mahometan* Superſtition has made, is not ſo great, as what the Profeſſors of it do pretend; they never met with any Philoſophers to diſpute with them, nor Princes to perſecute them; ſo that like Weeds in a fruitfull Soil, being neglected, they ſoon grow up, and over-run the good Ground. What Oppoſition the Chriſtian Religion met with in its Birth and Infancy, we have already ſpoken of; as alſo, that the Chriſtians, after all their Calamities, far exceed the *Mahometans* in number throughout all the Grand Signior's Dominions.

Alcoran c. of the Table.

To put an end to this Diſcourſe, I put it thus to the *Mahometan*: *Mahomet*, in the *Alcoran*, brings in God thus ſpeaking to him: [" After many Prophets, we have at " laſt ſent Jeſus the Son of *Mary*; he has " confirm'd the Ancient Scriptures; We " have given him the Goſpel full of Light, " to conduct the People into the right " way; they who follow the Goſpel, ought " to judg how it is taught in the Goſpel; " they who do not judge conformably to " what God hath taught them, are diſobe- " dient to his Divine Majeſty.] The like he has in many other places of the *Alcoran*, ex-

extolling also the Apostles of Jesus, as sent and inspired by God; moreover (*Chap. of Wines*) he calls the Jews Blasphemers of *Mary*, when they boasted how they had killed the Messiah, even Jesus the Son of *Mary*, the Apostle and Prophet of God. ["They did not kill him, nor crucified "him; but they crucified another Person "who resembled him, God having taken "up Jesus to himself into Heaven.] More-over *in the forecited Chap. of the Table*, says he, *Those who say, that the Messiah the Son of* Mary *is God, are impious.* Now let us see how these Sayings of *Mahomet* can hang together: It is in the Gospel that we read, how Christ (*the Word*) was God, or the Son of the living God; also that he was Crucified, and Rose again: It is in the Gospel, where we read, that Christ taught and commanded his Disciples, to Baptize all Nations, in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; as also instituted the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and left it as his last Legacy or Pledge of his Love before his Translation: Now if the Gospel, as *Mahomet* tells us, be full of Light, and left us by God, to direct us into the way of Truth, then must the forementioned Doctrines also be true; for should the Gospel teach us a Falshood, it could not be said to be full of Light, and

Alcor. cap. of Wines.

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to direct us into the way of Truth. Now if these Doctrines be true, then must that which is taught by *Mahomet* to the contrary be false; and consequently, that *Mahomet*, in so teaching, is no less contradictory to himself, than to the Truth, and was therefore no true Prophet, but a lying and wicked Imposture.

But before I take my leave of *Mahomet*, it will not be amiss, to advertise my Reader (if he be a Christian) of the danger, both he and all other Christians are in, of being reduc'd under the Slavery of this Mortal and common Enemy; so that how prosperous soever the Christian Arms are, or have been, we are still in greater danger than ever, of being ruin'd by the Legions of these Infidels, not those of their Spahi, or Janizaries, but by those of another Order far more mischeivous; forasmuch as they fight under our own Colors, and pretend to be of our Party, such Enemies are ever look'd upon as the most dangerous; for they are rarely discover'd till they have given the Mortal Blow. Now these are the *Socinians*, a Sect which, though exploded the World above a thousand Years ago, under the appellation of *Arians*, are in these our days risen again from the Grave, and like *Spectrums* appear every where in the Dark. In denying therefore the Divi-

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nity of Jesus Christ, they do with the *Mahometans* not only deny the Trinity, the Doctrine of Justification, or the Merits of Christ's Satisfaction, but also Baptism in the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, together with the Doctrine of Original Sin. So many fatal Errours do follow one upon the Neck of another, by denying that one Fundamental Truth which Christ himself is pleas'd to call the Basis of his Church, *viz.* That glorious confession of St. *Peter*, *Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God.* The *Socinians* we all know are a Mungril Brood, half Christians half Turks, and for this Reason 'tis that they swarm so much in *Poland*, *Hungary*, and *Transylvania*, and are found at this day to fight openly for the Crescent against the Cross. This Argument is too great and weighty to be discours'd upon under the Method I am engag'd to, it would require a Volume; though we cannot but hope, that as the Pens of pious and learned Men, will not be wanting to pursue and stab their Errours; so the Sword of the Magistrate, will not fail to find out their Persons.

CHAP. XXVII.

Of the Immortality of the Soul.

THe Immortality of Man's Soul is a point of high concernment, and comes next to be conſider'd of; for as much as all our reliance upon God's Providential Order, as alſo all the hopes and rewards which depend upon our Faith with whatſoever elſe relates to our Chriſtian Practice, are all built upon this Perſuaſion, *viz.* That the Soul of Man which is the Principle or Source of all his Actions, is of an incorruptible Nature, and ſurvives the Body.

But before we proceed to Proof, 'tis neceſſary to clear ſome doubts which ſeem to obſtruct us in the Proſecution of this Argument. The firſt grand difficulty is from the Old Teſtament, for if the Immortality of the Soul be ſo great a Truth, and ſo neceſſary to be believ'd, how comes it to paſs we find no mention of it in all the Jewiſh Writers of Old. In all the Books of the Old Teſtament, there is no place to be found where there is ſo much as mention made of the Kingdom of Heaven, or of a future State after Death. Had the

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Patriarchs and Prophets believ'd any ſuch thing, they muſt needs have mention'd it ſome time or other, as being a thing of the greateſt concern to them, and the beſt ſupport againſt the Misfortunes of the World and the Terrour of Death. And above all, *David* muſt needs have taken notice of it, having ſuch frequent occaſions given him for it from the whole courſe and variable occurrences of his life. Nay, even at his Death, his Diſcourſes with *Solomon* were very copious about ſetling the Temporal Affairs of his Kingdom, but not a Word of the place where he was going to; nor do we find that *Abraham*, *Jacob*, *Moſes*, *Samuel* or any of the Patriarchs and Prophets to whom God ſo largely and familiarly reveal'd his Will, ever touch'd upon this important point at the hour of their Death; only we read, that they ſlept with their Fathers, and were gather'd to their People, and there was an end. And though we read oft times of the Soul, and of Hell in the Old Teſtament; yet 'tis plain, that by Hell is underſtood nothing but Death, or the Grave; as by the Soul alſo is underſtood no more but the animal Life, and ſometimes the Heart and Affections. A Reſurrection of the Body is indeed mention'd by *Job* and *Daniel*, but that's another point; but no proof can be

produc'd which ſpeaks of the Soul as of an immaterial and ſpiritual ſubſtance, ſubſiſting after Death.

To this I anſwer, Firſt, that the Scripture is not ſo ſilent touching the Soul's Immortality, but that there is ground enough, even from Scripture, to make the matter dubious. For moſt Divines are of Opinion, that 'twas *Samuel's* real Soul which God ſuffer'd the Witch to raiſe the Night before *Saul's* Death, which could not be, had it not ſurviv'd the Body. And even in *Eccleſiaſtes*, (which Book ſeems even in a manner to determine Man's felicity in Temporal Enjoyments,) upon the ſumm of the matter, we are told by *Solomon*, that the Body ſhall return to the Duſt, but the Spirit to God that gave it: though much either way cannot be concluded from the Paſſages of this Book, which ſeems to be no other than a Collection of Obſervations made by *Solomon*, under his two Capacities, Natural and Divine; or a Miſcellany of Aphoriſms, as they were dictated by the Natural Man and Wiſdom. But whatever it be, this is certain; that if the Books of *Tobit* and of *Wiſdom* be of any Credit with us, (as I know not but they ſhou'd,) there is enough for our purpoſe, being told *Cap.* 2. and 3. of *Wiſdom*, that God created Man to be Immortal, and that

that the Souls of the Righteous are in the hands of God, and there ſhould no Torment touch them; and a little after, he ſays, that though they be puniſh'd in the ſight of Men, yet is their Hope full of Immortality. *Tobit* alſo in his Prayer, *Cap.* 3. deſires of God, that he might be deliver'd out of his Diſtreſs, and go into the everlaſting place.

In the next place, 'tis notwithſtanding probable that God thought fit to conceal the clear knowledge of this, as alſo of other Important Myſteries of Religion, ſuch as the Doctrine of the Trinity, and of the Incarnation, with ſome Truths of this Nature, from the Generality of the Jews, to render the Preaching of the Goſpel more glorious, by the new Diſcoveries it was to bring along with it, and this is what Saint *Paul* tells us expreſly, 2 *Tim.* c. 1. *viz.* That Jeſus Chriſt had aboliſh'd Death, and brought Life and Immortality to Light through the Goſpel; though 'tis pious alſo to believe, That many of the Holy Patriarchs and Prophets under the Moſaical Inſtitution, had ſome ſecret dawnings of this Light, even by the Shadows it reflected. Their wandrings in the Wilderneſs repreſented their Inſtability, Hardſhips, and Errours of Life, all which were to end in *Canaan*, the place of everlaſting

Reſt. Their Jubelees alſo, and Sabbaths, were Types alſo of the ſame Everlaſting Reſt, as St. *Paul* fully ſhews, *Hebr. the* 4th, where he proves alſo, that the promiſed Reſt, was not that which *Joſhua* gave them in *Canaan.*

Farther yet, 'tis not improbable that God ſhould conceal this Important Truth from the Jewiſh Fathers, to the end their Faith might be more Illuſtrious; for the leſs of Evidence, the greater is the Excellence of Faith, as St. *Paul* purſues at large through the 11th *Chap.* to the *Hebrews*, in the many noble Acts of Faith, recorded of the Jewiſh Worthies, and particularly of the Patriarchs he expounds it, that they ſaw the Promiſes a far off, and that they were only as Strangers and Pilgrims upon the Earth, ſeeking another Country which was heavenly. Now if they who had but ſuch a faint glimmering or dawning of a future State, ſhould live in ſuch a conſtant dependance upon God's Providence, with ſuch exactneſs of Moral Juſtice, and with ſuch indifference for the Things of this Life, in reſpect of God's Commands, was a thing infinitely more Noble, than if they had had future Rewards within a near proſpect; for then Self Intereſt might ſeem to have been their Motive, whereas now all their Obedience was reſolv'd into the Will and Plea-

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ſure of their Almighty Sovereign; and therefore 'tis that *Abraham*'s Faith is ſo highly recommended to us in this Chapter: For in his readineſs to ſacrifice his Son, he actually ſacrific'd all the Affections of Nature, and the conſiderations even of his Reaſon, in his chearfull compliance with God's Commands. Many are the noble Acts of Faith recorded of theſe famous Men of old, who yet received not the Promiſes, God having provided ſome better things for us, that they without us, ſhould not be made perfect.

In ſhort, the Doctrine of the Soul's Immortality being taught by Jeſus Chriſt, and the divine Authority of Jeſus Chriſt being evidently deduc'd from the Writings of the Old Teſtament, it follows alſo, that this Doctrine was therein contain'd, as to its Cauſes, like as an Embryo in the Womb, which though inviſible for a while, was in its due time to be brought forth, and be made manifeſt to the World.

Another Objection from Scripture againſt the Immortality of the Soul, may be grounded upon that Paſſage of *Geneſis* the 9th, whereby God ſpeaking of Man ſaid, *Surely the Blood of your Lives will I require, at the Hand of every Beaſt will I require it*, &c. what our Tranſlation renders *Life*, is by the Vulgar rendred *Soul*, or the *Gen.* 9th.

Blood of your Souls, and therefore *Levit.* 17. 'tis ſaid, that *the Life or Soul of all Fleſh, is the Blood thereof*; and for that Reaſon 'twas that Blood was prohibited, as being the Life or Soul of every living Creature. Now if the Life or Soul be the Blood, or in the Blood, (as the Phraſe is us'd promiſcuouſly,) it follows; that proportionably to the effuſion of Blood, the Soul alſo is effuſible, and conſequently diviſible and Mortal.

To this 'tis anſwer'd, that Scripture Phraſes are not to be taken according to the ſtrict Notions of Philoſophy, but according to the Apprehenſions and cuſtomary Speech of thoſe they are directed to: For ſo it is, that whilſt we ſee Life departing leiſurely upon the effuſion of Blood, we ſay commonly, that the Soul departeth with it, foraſmuch as the Spirits which are the great Inſtruments of the Soul, are recruited by the Blood, which upon this conſideration alſo may be ſaid to be the Vehicle of Life, but cannot be ſaid to be Life it ſelf, but in an improper ſenſe; for though upon an Evacuation of the Blood, the Soul or Life departeth, ſo the Soul or Life may depart alſo, the Blood ſtill remaining in the Body without any notable diminution or alteration.

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The next Prejudice againſt the Immortality of the Soul is grounded upon the Birth, Growth, Progreſs, and Decays we obſerve uſually of its operations conformable to the ſeveral Stages of Life. Reaſon we ſee does begin to diſcloſe it ſelf in Child-hood; and although ſome Men have a greater ſhare of it than others, yet upon the main, it ſeems to borrow its Improvements from the different Tempers and Diſpoſitions of Men, and the ſeveral Methods of Education; nay ſome Countries have an Influence upon the Genius's of Men more than others, and inclines them to more Man-like and regular Thoughts, and render them quicker Witted and ſubtle. If the Soul of Man were endow'd naturally with ſuch excellent Gifts, why does it not manifeſt the ſame without ſo much cultivation and Expenſe; without ſo much diligence and ſtudy? and as faſt as we acquire the knowledg of ſome things, we forget others; ſo that all the Productions of the Mind, are rather the effects of Art than of Nature. We ſee alſo, when the Body is moſt Athletick, the Mind alſo is moſt vigorous; and as the Body decays by Age or Sickneſs, ſo the Functions of the Soul languiſh alſo, and by all the Experiments we can make, are totally ſuppreſs'd by Death. Beſides, if the Soul of Man were Immortal, how comes it to

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paſs, that it has naturally ſuch a horrour of Death; whereas it ſhould rather rejoice at its approach, as the only means of its deliverance from that Obſcurity and Reſtraint it is ſubject to in the Body, from which being once releas'd, 'tis ſaid to enjoy a perfect and unchangable State of Bliſs.

To the latter part of this Objection 'tis anſwer'd; that the Fears which ſeize uſually on dying Men, is the beſt Argument in the World to prove the Soul's Immortality: For dying Men could never have ſuch a fear, had they not Apprehenſions of a future State, as alſo of its Duration and Immutability; ſo that theſe Conſiderations being incident to Men of all Conditions, Ages, Countries, and Perſwaſions, prove ſufficiently, that they are inherent and natural to the Soul, as Gravity, Levity, and ſuch like Inclinations of Bodies, do demonſtrate there is another Region without them, to which they naturally tend; were the Soul of Man as well as his Body extinguiſhable by Death, to dye would be no more, than to cloſe up all the Labours of a tedious Life, in one ſound and eternal Sleep; a thing which all Men naturally would rather covet than abhor: But when a departing Soul feels an inward Agony, and labours betwixt Hopes and Fears, it ſhews it is approaching

proaching towards a future ſtate of Happineſs or Woe, the apprehenſion whereof, cannot chooſe but fill it with ſome amazement and diſtraction.

As to the other part of this Objection, *viz.* That the Powers of the Soul, do riſe and fall proportionably to the Improvements and Delays of Nature, therefore they muſt periſh with it: I anſwer, this does by no means follow. A Candle burns brighter or dimmer, as the Glaſs or Lanthorn which contains it is more clear or cloudy, and yet the Light would not be extinguiſhed, though the brittle Caſe were broken; but on the contrary, it would appear with a fuller Luſtre, and diffuſe its Beams without confinement. When we ſee one of thoſe floating Caſtles of the Sea proudly ſailing; when we obſerve how eaſily 'tis turn'd about, and how regular it is in all its Motions, and yet of that force, as to reſiſt the bluſtring Winds, and the raging Ocean, we are eaſily perſuaded, that there is ſome one within who animates this great and curious Machine, who though he be no part or Member of the ſame, yet all the Effects he works, depend upon the good diſpoſition and frame of the Ship; for if it be old, leaky, or any way diſabled in the Hulk, Rigging, or any of its ſubſervient Inſtruments; the Pilot though never ſo knowing

knowing, will appear very defective in all his Endeavours; nay, though the Pilot knows himself to be of a more durable and excellent Frame than the Vessel which carries him, yet he fears a Wreck, and labours what he can to save his Ship from the Apprehensions he has of the uncertain State to which he shall be expos'd, when the Vessel which now covers him, shall fall to pieces; how appositе this Emblem is, to illustrate our present Argument, is obvious to all.

As to the Operations of Man's Soul, I confess much must be allow'd to the force and Methods of Education, and to the Temper of the Climate in which Men live; and yet we may observe, that the grossest Peasants have naturally all these Gifts, which the wisest Men by all their Arts and Study can arrive to. The laborious Husbandman, though he cannot discourse of the Dimensions, Beauty, and Motion of the Heavens, understands well enough the Criticisms of every Season, and knows also the Virtue and Temper of the Earth, he cultivates much better than the inquisitive Philosopher, and accordingly takes his Prospect, and makes his profitable Returns; he is cautious and subtle in making his little Bargains, as the greatest Statesman can pretend to be in his Contracts and

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Measures of Government; and what is yet more obſervable, as he has a greater dependance upon Providence, ſo naturally he ſhews a greater ſubmiſſion to the Will of Heaven, and bears his Loſſes and Diſappointments with greater patience, than thoſe who have been ſtudied in the Schools of Vertue; ſo that much ſtill is to be attributed to the Genius and Fabrick of the Soul, the natural Source of all his Actions.

We may obſerve alſo of many Bruits, that they are endued with a natural Sagacity, great Docility, and with a greater quickneſs of Senſe, than what any Man can pretend to, and yet one who is born Deaf, and conſequently Dumb, though he be thus defective in that Senſe of Hearing, which is ſo eſſentially requiſite for the attainment of Underſtanding, and by which all Inſtruction finds a Paſſage to the Soul; I ſay ſuch a Man by the help of Art, (as daily Experience does evince in Mutes,) may be brought to have an accurate and correct Conception of things, to be moſt apprehenſive of what is ſaid or done, and by the leaſt Hints and Motions of the Body, to underſtand the Minds of thoſe he does converſe with, and by an extraordinary quickneſs in the motion of his Hands and Eyes, to communicate his own Thoughts; a thing which Bruits though never

never ſo ſubtil and prone to Imitation, and though moſt accute and attentive in all their Senſes, and though inſtructed with the greateſt diligence, can never arrive to in any degree conſiderable; which ſhews ſufficiently, that there is a vaſt difference betwixt the Nature and Capacity of the Animal, and thoſe of the Rational Soul.

That force of Judgment and Reaſon, which we obſerve frequently in Men under the decays of Nature, whether by Age, or Sickneſs, is not, I confeſs, ſuch a ſatisfactory Proof of ſuch a perfection of the Soul, as is now diſcours'd of; ſince we find that even habits of Exerciſe, acquir'd in our younger Years, as of Dancing, or Inſtrumental performances, continue to ſome conſiderable degree in Men, maugre all the Indiſpoſitions and Decays of the Body; much more then may thoſe Habits of the Mind, which were acquir'd by Diſcipline and Study, continue vigorous in a languiſhing Conſtitution, though they were admitted to ſpring from an Elementory mixture. But for all this, we may frequently obſerve in dying Men, ſome ſudden Sallies and Tranſports of Joy, ſome extraordinary Efforts of Mind, which were not the effects of Education; and above all, in dying Children, whoſe tender Age never yet arriv'd to any ſuch Inclinations, we may often-

oftentimes obſerve ſtrange Illuminations, and quietneſs of Spirit, a little before their departure, which, I ſay, can never proceed from what they never yet acquir'd, but from the innate Propenſities and Genius of the Soul.

But whatſoever that dependence be, which the Soul has upon the Body, and though it ſhould be granted, that it receiv'd all its Improvements from it, yet this is no Argument againſt the future and independent State of the Soul after death. An Embryo we ſee, is form'd and nouriſh'd by the Womb, and yet when the juſt appointed time for its departure happens, it is ſo far from ceaſing to be what it was before, that it acquires a nobler Degree of Life, by being ſeparated from its Matrix, and arrives to the perfection of a living Creature endued with Senſe, which before only was of a vegetative Nature; ſo it is with the Soul, which though nouriſh'd or cheriſh'd by the Miniſtry of theſe Corporeal Organs, when once it is deliver'd from them, aſſumes yet a higher degree of Perfection and Life, and is capable to ſubſiſt and act of it ſelf, by Methods far more Noble and Spiritual, than thoſe by which it was employ'd, when it was in Union with the Body.

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Having thus given a ſummary Reply to ſuch Obſervations, as ſeem'd moſt prejudicial to the Soul's Immortality; let us now proceed to prove this Doctrine by ſuch natural Medicines, as ſhall yet give farther ſatisfaction to the foregoing Doubts, as well as eſtabliſh the truth of our preſent Aſſertion. Now the general Arguments by which this Truth is demonſtrable, are taken, 1. From the Operations of the Soul. 2. From the natural Inclinations of the Soul. 3. From the Juſtice of Divine Providence. And laſtly, from the Teſtimonies of the wiſeſt Heathens.

Firſt as to the Operations of the rational Soul, though the firſt Rudiments we have of things, be borrowed from the Impreſſions made upon our outward Senſes, yet the Reductions and Inferences we make of things (which are the Works properly of Reaſon) are of a much ſublimer Nature; ſo that the Organs to Senſe, are but like the Candles to the Soul, which diſcover indeed the Object in ſome reſpect, whilſt the diſcerning Faculties, is of an extraction far more ſpiritual and pure. With what fixt and conſtant Applications does the Mind of Man bend it ſelf with all its Inſtruments upon its Object, and through how many Labyrinths of Doubts, and ſeeming Contradictions does it wind it ſelf in the purſuit

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of it, whether it be matter of Judgment and Practice, or of Speculation only and Knowledg? With what order, silence, and readiness does every Faculty stand prepar'd, how quick and diligent are they in their Reports, and how capacious and indefatigable is the Mind in receiving them? Cogitation never wearies it, though the Animal Powers grow tir'd often, and require repose. What an infinite variety of Objects occurr to the Mind at once, what numberless Idea's and Images of things hover always over it, and how quick are its transitions from one thing to another, seeming, as it were, in one Point or Instant of time, to view all Persons, Things, and Places, which ever made an impression upon the Sense! The Mind passes in a moment from the dark Centre of the Earth, to the utmost surface of the World, and there surveys this vast Fabrick: From thence it flies through that immense or imaginary space, which is incomprehensible and infinite, and which surrounds the whole Creation. It fathoms the Nature of Things, so that whatsoever has an Existence falls under its consideration; it does not only take in present and past Things, but it extends its Power to future Objects, whether possible, or such as really shall come to pass; and by a just balancing of what is past,

with what may happen, it frames excellent Rules for the government of Life; it leaves us Precepts alſo, how to moderate our Paſſions by a right uſe of them; and by theſe means, teaches us the Divine Art of Wiſdom, and true Felicity.

How many Conceptions are there, which hourly offer themſelves to our Thoughts, when we retreat a little within our ſelves? Of theſe ſome are ſimple Apprehenſions only of particular things; others by way of Compoſition, are the reſults of divers Images, amidſt which great multiplicity, ſome there are which at the firſt ſight ſeem plauſible and attractive, which yet upon farther examination of Reaſon, are found to be ſuperficial only and fallacious: Others again ſeem abſtruſe and uſeleſs, which upon a ſtrict Enquiry, are found to be moſt beneficial and ſollid; and accordingly they are committed to the Store-houſes, or ſeveral Apartments of Memory, there to be conſerv'd and reveiw'd at leiſure, and to be produc'd for ſervice towards our farther acquiſition of Knowledg, or for our better conduct in the Occurrences and Affairs of Life; all which Conceptions and Inferences of Reaſon are of that vaſt extent, and of that ſpiritual and ſubtil Nature, as cannot but tell us, that their Spring is pure and inexhauſtible.

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Contemplation is another intellectual Act of a Rational Soul, and indeed the higheſt and moſt Seraphick; for by this the Mind is elevated above all ſenſible Forms, and many times deſerts the habitation of the Body, it ſeems to break Priſon, and feels an ineffable Agility and Pleaſure in being unconfin'd, whilſt the Body lies ſenſeleſs, and as it were inchanted with the ſoft Chains of Sleep. And when the Mind recovers it ſelf out of the Ecſtaſie in which all the inferiour Powers are ſometimes drown'd, what languors are there in the Soul, what ſtruglings to return to the ſame ſtate of ſeparation, whilſt it nauſeats all earthly Objects whatſoever; which ſhews that the Soul thirſts after another State, independent on the Body, and by conſequence muſt ſurvive it.

In the laſt place, if we reflect a little upon the Will, the other great Faculty of a humane Soul, we ſhall find its Operations to be ſo free and magiſterial, as cannot but tell us, that the Soul, of which it is a Branch, is independent on all Animal Inclinations whatſoever; for ſo it is, that we have a Power of Election and of Rejection of Objects, contrary all the dictates of Senſe and Paſſion. We ſee every day how Men chooſe Impriſonment rather than Liberty, Poverty and Diſgrace rather than Wealth and Honour;

and even Death it ſelf rather than Life, and can bid an eternal Adieu to all ſenſual Enjoyments which Nature can induce them to, and all upon future Conſiderations; ſo that the current of voluntary Actions, mounts much higher we ſee than the Level of Nature, and muſt iſſue therefore from a higher Spring: Therefore Conſcience, which is nothing but that Impartial Judgment, which every Man makes within the Tribunal of his own Breaſt, by reflecting on what he has done, or on what he is about to do; how quick and impartial is it in recalling to Memory ſuch things, as many times we would willingly forget; how inexorable is it in condemning the Man himſelf, and how ſevere in inflicting condign Puniſhments, more powerfull, than all the Tortures of the Rack, and of the longeſt continuance, and as ghaſtly as the Horrors of Hell, being ſuch as no Methods of Reaſon, no Arts of Education, no Charms of Senſe, no Worldly Fruition, no Spirits of Wine, no Phyſick, no good Company, nor Muſick, and finally no Decays of Body can lay a Sleep; and on the other hand, when a Man has the Teſtimony of a good Conſcience on his ſide, though he expects no Rewards from the World; nay, though he expect Diſcomforts, as alſo loſs of Friends, Liberty, Eſtate and good Name, and even

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of life it ſelf, how does he rejoice within; with what chearfull Countenance does he meet the Menaces of Fortune, and in the midſt of Tempeſts finds ſerenity. Now whence can this proceed but from the pretenſions the Soul has of a future Judgement it muſt undergo after Death, which cannot be, were the Soul Material and Mortal.

With theſe, and infinite other things, is the Mind continually employ'd without Obſtacle or Danger, without Reſt or Interruption; ſo that when all the Senſes and Faculties of the Body are actually ſuſpended as in Sleep, yet is the Soul ſtill vigilant and active, which ſhews plainly, that 'tis of a Nature far more durable and perfect than any Animal Capacity whatſoever; whether Dreams be an effect of the Animal Faculty or of the Mind rather, is not yet determin'd, 'tis more probable that they are deriv'd from the latter. 'Tis true, the Diſcourſes which we ſeem to make whilſt we are a ſleep, how rational ſoever they appear to Men in this Circumſtance, are found very trivial, and many times ridiculous when our Senſes are full a wake; yet this proves not that theſe Thoughts of the Night are deriv'd from ſome other Principle inferiour to the Mind; it being moſt evident, that the groſs Conceits, with

which the thoughts of ſleeping Men are fill'd, are nothing but the Operations of the Soul, deprav'd and clouded with ſuch Vapours as fill the Brain in the time of Sleep, and which do not only ſuffocate the Senſes for a time, but by their ſpiſſous fumes fill all the Bells of this upper Region of the Mind; ſo that all its Operations receive a kind of fuliginous Tincture from them. And hence we find alſo, that in Men who are perfectly awake, and whoſe Brains are fill'd with aduſt and ſcorching Vapours, (as in a Fever, and many other Diſtempers,) all the Actions of the Mind ſeem like Dreams, and all Objects occurr to fancy full of Terrour, Agony and Diſtraction, by reaſon of thoſe burning Particles which fume from diſtemper'd Blood.

The ſecond general Argument for the Soul's Immortatily, is drawn from its Natural Inclinations, which are ſuch as are ſtill aſpiring towards higher degrees of Perfection. The Mind is never ſatiated with Knowledge, but ſtill thirſts after new Diſcoveries; our perception of one thing does naturally lead us into the enquiry of another; which having once obtained, our Soul takes a farther proſpect ſtill, till at length being arriv'd to the firſt origine of all things, it dwells on it, and enquires alſo into the Nature and Perfections of it,

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as far as its own limits will allow, and deſerves to be united with it for ever. Now this ſhews ſufficiently, that in this life 'tis only in a tendency to that Perfection and Reſt, which cannot be attain'd to but in another. The deſcending ſtone, if any thing obſtruct its Motion, does by its reſiſting weight tell us, that by Nature it would go farther, and the nearer it comes to its centre, it preſſes ſtill with greater weight, and, if no obſtacle occurr, it is ſtill more impetuous in its Motion, till it falls at laſt to that point of Reſt from which 'twill not be remov'd, but with greater difficulty. In like manner we obſerve alſo, how the Flame mounts upwards, and the more pure and ſubtile 'tis, the quicker in its Motion, which ſtill encreaſes, the higher it riſes, till at laſt 'tis ſwallow'd up and incorporated in that immenſe Region of *Æther*, to which it was deſign'd by Nature. Thus fares it with the Soul of Man, which does enlarge its deſires far beyound the Enjoyments of Life; the more tis fill'd, the greater ſtill is its appetite, which diſcovers plainly that it is not yet arriv'd to its place of Reſt; but is only in the way towards it, which ſince it can never find whilſt it is in union with the Body; it remains that there muſt be a future State, where it ſhall meet with a ſuitable content, which cannot

not be, unleſs the Soul by Nature were Incorruptible and Immortal. So that whoſoever ſhall but make a Reflection upon himſelf, and conſider the Frame and Temper of his own Mind, muſt needs obſerve it to be of a Nature more active and diffuſive than Fire, and more quick and penetrating than Lightning, and as to its comprehenſive Power moſt capacious, and ſuch as Labour cannot exhauſt, nor Age make feeble: On the contrary, the longer it endures, it ſtill grows more Vigorous, and requires ſomething more than finite to fills its Dimenſions, from all which we may well conclude, that 'tis of a Spiritual and Angelick Nature, and ſuch as muſt ſurvive all the decays and changes of the Body.

And indeed, were it corruptible and mortal, it muſt be ſome of theſe ways; Firſt, by the Action of its Contrary, as we ſee mixt Bodies are corrupted by ſome Exceſs or Irregularity in their firſt qualities, which interchequing with one another, cauſe a diſſolution; but this cannot be the caſe of the Soul, which is of a Nature moſt pure and unmixt. Another way by which things are deſtroy'd, is by Diviſion and Separation of its parts; thus by daily experience we ſee, how things Natural and Artificial are always waſted and broke to peices; but the

the Soul being without Extenſion of parts, cannot be diſſolv'd by diviſibility. A third way by which we obſerve Bodies to periſh, is by a deficiency of their Aliment; thus a Tree dies for want of Moiſture, and a Lamp is extinguiſh'd for want of Oyl to feed it; but 'tis not ſo with the Soul of Man, for though it ſubſiſt in the Body, as the flame of a Lamp in the Viol, yet has it not its Illumination from it. 'Tis true, it receives many Informations by the outward Organs of the Senſes; but theſe Images being ſimple and common, bear no Analogy to the workings of the Mind; beſides, we find the Soul ſubſiſting and acting when all ſenſitive aſſiſtence is withdrawn. That then, on which the Mind of Man feeds and improves it ſelf, is that infinite variety of Objects, whether viſible or intellectual, which we meet with perpetually, both in Heaven and Earth, together with thoſe noble Speculations and Concluſions of Reaſon, which though compounded of a few naked Notions, and capable of being multiplied into as great a number as that of Words, which yet are but the Productions of a few ſimple and Alphabetick Sounds, variouſly mixt and ſet together. Now ſince the Multitude and greatneſs of mental Objects can never be exhauſted by the Soul, it follows, that the Soul

Soul of Man can never periſh through want of a ſuitable Aliment and Supply; indeed all ſenſible and material things cannot ſo properly be ſaid to periſh as to be corrupted, by being chang'd into ſomething of another Nature; which Tranſmutation or Corruption of things is at the moſt nothing but a reſolution of them into their Elements, from whoſe implace new bodies do riſe; but the Soul of Man is uncapable of all ſuch Alterations. It is not reſolvable into any Elements, as being of a Nature more unmixt and pure than any Element whatſoever; it is not changeable into another Soul, or capable of being other than what it is, but by Annihilation; which yet is not conſiſtent with the Nature of God, who having once created a thing, is never known to have reduc'd it to its firſt nothing.

And therefore, as the third General Argument, the Immortality of the Soul is yet farther demonſtrable from the Juſtice of God's Providence. We have obſerv'd in the precedent Chapters, that as to the Comforts and Bleſſings of this Life, wicked Men generally have the upper hand, whilſt Innocent and Vertuous Perſons are oft-times expos'd to unjuſt Sentences, Calumnies, Oppreſſion, Torments, Impriſonments, Confiſcation of Goods, and

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ſometimes to Death it ſelf. How many a poor and honeſt Chriſtian is there in the World, who ſuffers by Sickneſs, Cold, Hunger and all courſes of Poverty, and yet lives always in an humble Reſignation of his Will to that of Almighty God, and is thankfull too for the ſmall Comforts of life he receives from him by the Miniſtry of his own laborious Hands; whilſt ſome rich Glutton lies Batning amidſt his Wealth, and ſwelling with Pride and Fatneſs of Bread abandons himſelf to eaſe, and all manner of diſorders, both of Body and Mind: Whoſe Religion indeed conſiſts only in having ſome young formal Chaplain for State, rather than for Devotion, thinking his Equipage defective, unleſs he has ſome one in the Eccleſiaſtick Livery to wait upon him. Now how theſe and infinite ſuch Indecencies can conſiſt with the Juſtice of God's Providential Government, is a difficulty which can never be anſwered, were there not a Future State, where unfortunate Vertue ſhould be crown'd, and proſperous wickedneſs be chaſtis'd; which yet can never be, unleſs the Soul of Man ſurvive the Miſeries and Diſſolution of the Body. The Truth of it is, take away the Doctrine of the Soul's Immortality, and we deſtroy all Morality; For, morally ſpeaking, who would deny his Soul the Con-

Contents and Pleaſures of his Appetite, were all Felicity determin'd in ſenſual and preſent Enjoyments? Who would ſcruple to enrich himſelf by Fraud, Robbery, and Murder, or to gratifie his Luſts by Rapes, Adultery, or any other Enormity, were he ſure there were no Puniſhment to be met with after Death? The conſequence of which diſorders could be no leſs than the ſubverſions of all Property and Civil Government.

Upon theſe and ſuch like Conſiderations we may in the laſt place obſerve, that the wiſeſt and moſt learned Men through all Ages and Countries of the World, believ'd the Soul's Immortality, ſuch as *Hermes*; and *Pythagoras*, who by the few Fragments that are extant of him in Ancient Writers, was of the ſame Belief. *Socrates* at his Death adher'd to this Belief alſo, and reſiſted the Strength and Malignity of his Poiſon by this Antidote; that his Soul ſhortly ſhould enjoy the Society of the Vertuous and Bleſſed in the other World. This Doctrine was much improv'd by *Plato* and his Followers, eſpecially *Platinus*, who was the moſt learned of that Sect, and who wrote *ex profeſſo*, divers learned Books upon this Argument; the ſumm of which is, that the Soul of Man is not deriv'd from the Nature of the Parents, but immediately

Hermes in Pœmand. cap. 1.

ly from God; that though it ſubſiſt in the Body, yet its Operations are independent on it: Foraſmuch as the Soul, the more it withdraws it ſelf from all ſenſible Objects, the more diſtinct and clear is Ratiocination. From whence we conclude, that when it ſhall totally be ſeparated, it ſhall apprehend things in an inſtant by Intuition, without the helps of reaſoning; by Ratiocination is nothing but a Combat of the Mind, to evince ſomething of which it doubts, which doubtings ſpring from the groſs and cloudy Suggeſtions and Obſtacles of the Body, from which being once deliver'd, there will be no place left for Doubt and Heſitation.

As for the *Stoicks*, their Doctrine ſeemed to lead them to a different perſuaſion, ſince they plac'd all the Felicity of Man in the Practice of Vertue, with regard to no other reward: So that our Moral Actions ceaſing, (as certainly they do after Death,) all is at an end. And this Doctrine of theirs, though it carried with it a great many of noble Sentiments, yet it failing in the true end of Man's Felicity, it oblig'd them to maintain a great number of Paradoxes in its defence; whereas had they underſtood the Immortality of the Soul, and future Rewards after Death, that had been ſufficient to have ſupported them in a ver-

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tuous courſe of life, maugre all the diſaſters that might aſſault them, and which theſe Philoſophers endeavour'd to oppoſe, by ſo many noble Precepts of their Doctrine. *Seneca* in ſome places ſeems dubious, yet in his Conſolatory Epiſtle to *Mercia*, upon the Death of his Son, he is altogether Divine. *Epictetus* alſo, a *Stoick*, and the Glory of his Sect and Age, aſſerts every where the Soul's Immortality.

Tuſcul. Quæſt. lib. 1.

But above all, *Tully*, the Flower of Roman Eloquence, and himſelf a Philoſopher of *Plato's* School, is every where moſt Copious and Raviſhing, when he comes to ſpeak of the Capacities and Future State of the Soul. "Many (ſays he) think the "Eternity of Souls to be incredible, becauſe "they cannot comprehend the eſſence and "qualities of a ſeparated Soul; but can they "(let me ask them) define what a Soul is "even in the Body, of what form it is, "what its dimenſions are, and what is the "place of its abode? (And a little after) "for my own part, when I ſeriouſly re-"flect upon the Nature of the Soul, it "ſeems to be much more difficult and ob-"ſcure to know what the Soul is, whilſt "it is in Conjunction with the Body, "where it ſeems to be lodg'd, as in a fo-"reign Inn, than to underſtand the ſame "when it quits the Lodging in which it "ſojourns,

"ſojourns, and takes its Journey home-
"wards to Heaven, the place of its con-
"ſtant Habitation: For if we cannot un-
"derſtand that which we never ſaw, we
"may as well diſown all knowledge of
"God as of a ſeparated Soul; but Spirits
"are to be underſtood and known only
"by Spirits: And by and by he concludes,
"whatſoever that thing is which perceives,
"which underſtands, which wills, which
"is always Vigorous and Maſculine, muſt
"needs be Celeſtial and Divine, and there-
"fore Eternal; for we can form no other
"Notions of God, but as of a Mind ab-
"ſtracted from all material Concretion;
"underſtanding all things, moving all
"things, and being it ſelf ended with an
"Eternal Activity: All which the ſame
"Divine Oratour proſecutes moſt copi-
"ouſly in his Book *de Senectute*; telling us,
"that it was not the Itch of Diſputation
"which drew him to this Perſuaſion, but
"having built his Belief upon the Autho-
"rities of *Pythagoras* and *Socrates*, he de-
"clares farther, that ſuch is the celerity of
"the Soul's Thoughts, ſo great its Memo-
"ry of paſt, and foreſight of future things;
"ſo many are its Arts, Sciences, and other
"Inventions, that 'tis impoſſible that the
"Nature which comprehends ſuch excel-
"lent things, ſhould be Mortal; and there-

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"fore ſince the Mind is always a work-
"ing, and has this principle of Motion
"from it ſelf, and knows alſo no period of
"its Motion; becauſe it can never divide
"from it ſelf, and ſerve the nature of the
"Soul, is void of all Mixture and Allay,
"and contains nothing heterogenious to
"it ſelf; he concludes, that it muſt be in-
"diviſible and uncapable of Diſſolution,
"following (as he ſays) the Doctrine of
"*Plato* in this particular. To Conclude,
"he ſays, that if I do err in this Belief of
"the Soul's Immortality, I do err willfully,
"nor will I ever retract this beloved Er-
"rour whilſt I live; or if it ſhould be poſ-
"ſible, that being dead, I ſhould be void
"of all ſenſe, (as ſome Minute Sophiſters
"do fancy,) I ſhall not fear to be reproach-
"ed by them.

Nor was this Doctrine of the Soul's Immortality the conſtant Belief of the wiſeſt *Greeks* and *Romans* only, but alſo of the *Perſians* too, as appears by the excellent Diſcourſe of dying *Cyrus* upon this ſubject, recorded by *Xenophon*. And as for the Poets, they univerſally tell us of a future State after Death, wherein the Wicked ſhall be puniſh'd, and the Juſt rewarded; and what their ſenſe was in this matter we may read in *Lucan*, in that noble Deſcription he makes of *Pompey*'s Apotheoſis.

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From all which Conſiderations we have a moſt undeniable proof of its Eternal Verity. It being impoſſible that a Doctrine eſtabliſhed upon all the Principles of Reaſon, of ſuch an univerſal conſent, and believ'd by the wiſeſt, beſt, and moſt learned Men of all Ages, in oppoſition to all humane Intereſts, and ſenſual Suggeſtions whatſoever, ſhould be the effect only of uncertain Conjecture, or of a premeditated Colluſion.

CHAP. XXVIII.

Of Natural Religion as a means to Salvation.

HAving ſhewn in the precedent Chapters of this Diſcourſe, that the wiſer Heathen had not only a knowledge of the true God, as the Creator and Preſerver of the Univerſe, but a knowledge alſo of the Immortality of the Soul, and of a future State where good Men ſhould receive Rewards, and wicked Men due Puniſhments from the hands of God moſt juſt; it follows of courſe to be enquir'd into, how far this Belief of theirs

might make them capable of ſuch Happineſs or of Salvation. And here I ſhall promiſe as a foundation, or firſt Principle to what ſhall follow; that the Efficient or Meritorious Cauſe of procuring Salvation to Mankind, can be no other but Jeſus Chriſt, who by his Obedience and Paſſion, hath redeemed good Men, and made them capable of Eternal Happineſs. Next, that all good Motions, vertuous Inclinations, and intellectual Improvements, are not acquirable by any Natural ſtrength, but by the help and concurrence of God. So St. *Paul.* ſays expreſsly, *Rom.* 1. where ſpeaking of the Heathen, he declares; how that *which may be known of God is manifeſt in them, for God hath ſhew'd it to them.*

Our preſent enquiry then will be of the inſtrumental Courſe, or of the means by which the Merits of Chriſt's Life and Paſſion may be applied to Men, in order to their Salvation. For the more Methodical Proſecution of which Point 'twill be expedient to conſider, Firſt, The State of Mankind before the coming of Chriſt. Secondly, the State and Circumſtances of Mandkind after his coming. Before the coming of Chriſt, as hath been already ſhewn the Gentiles, though they had ſolid Notions of the Nature and Perfections of a Deity, yet there is little or nothing extant

extant which can countenance any Expectation they had of such a Deliverer, as we are now discoursing of: And as to the Jews for what appears from the Old Testament, they knew but little and obscurely of another Life, as we have also before spoken unto. They expected a Deliverer or Messiah 'tis true; but then they figur'd him to be a Temporal Conqueror, such as *Cæsar* or *Alexander*, who should erect their Nation also into a vast Empire, and bring the World under their Subjection. A thing indeed which they earnestly hoped for, having been themselves under heavy Oppressions for many Ages; Nay, so deep was this Opinion rooted in the Jews, that even the Disciples of Christ, who were daily taught by and convers'd with him, could hardly be wean'd from this Belief, as appears by the Address or Petition on the behalf of *Zebedee*'s Children, that they might sit one on the right hand, and the other on the left hand of Christ in his Kingdom; as also from their constant enquiry of Christ, when he would restore the Kingdom or Empire unto *Israel*. But this, as having been already discours'd of, and being a thing which will admit of little dispute, I shall readily leave and pass on to take a glance of Mankind after the coming of Christ, and his Ascension into Heaven.

They who have had the Happineſs to be born within the Church, where the Myſteries of the Chriſtian Religion are ſuck'd in with their firſt Milk, and grow up into their Nature; ſuch I ſay, cannot but have a diſtinct knowledge of what the Chriſtian Religion teacheth, concerning Chriſt and his Merits, ſo that if they do not act ſuitably to that knowledg, they are verily inexcuſable. But then for thoſe who never had ſuch an Education, nor ever heard of Chriſt or his Goſpel, and yet retain true Notions of the Nature, Power, and Juſtice of God, and live juſtly and conformably to that knowledg, retaining a diſpoſition to receive farther Inſtruction with all propenſity to Vertue; I cannot ſee but that they may juſtly be ranked with thoſe great and wiſe Men amongſt the Ancients, whether Philoſophers or others, in whoſe Lives and Writings we find ſo many remains of the true apprehenſions they had of a Deity, together with their great Pregnancy in Vertue. Now of both theſe ſorts of Men, whether before or after Chriſt, the queſtion will be the ſame; for as much as both were under the ſame State and Guidance of Natural Illumination and Moral Vertues.

I know it is granted, and with very good reaſon too, that ſuch as were contemporaries

temporaries with the Patriarchs, though they were not of the ſame Lineage with *Abraham*, had ſuch a knowledge of the true God as made them capable of Salvation. Such a one was *Melchiſedech*, (of whom we read ſo great things;) ſuch a one alſo *Job*, who liv'd probably about the time of the firſt Patriarchs; for we read that he liv'd in the time of the *Chaldean* greatneſs; alſo *Jethro*, the Father-in-law of *Moſes*, having ſuch an extraordinary and infallible Information of the Divine Will from the Mouth and Miracles of *Moſes*, and being himſelf alſo a Perſon of great Conduct and Wiſdom, as appears from Scripture, he could not but tranſmit the like Inſtructions to his Poſterity, as did *Melchiſedech* and *Job*, without all queſtion; the ſame likewiſe we may conclude of the deſcendents from *Abraham* by *Iſhmael*, and of his Off-ſpring by *Keturah*.

Nor was it unuſual in thoſe days, whilſt Men liv'd under that unpoliſh'd but golden Age, for God to manifeſt his Will by ſingular Revelation to wiſe Men, even long after the Covenant made with *Abraham*, as appears by the Hiſtory of *Balaam*, who though an Alien from the Houſe of *Abraham*, had a free Communication with God upon occaſions of Moment, and propheſied as clearly of the coming of the Meſſiah,

as any other of the Ancient Patriarchs and Prophets. Now for those whose Doctrine and Actions are not recorded in sacred Writ, as *Pythagoras*, *Socrates*, *Plato*, *Solon*, *Lycurgus*, *Numa*, and amongst them, I know not why I may not reckon that strenuous Defender of his Country's Liberty, *Tullius*, *Cicero*; I say, these and many others of the same class, as they are known to have had noble Notions of the Deity, and to have been great and prudent Masters in matters of Morality; so likewise are they famous for their own exemplary Lives and Government, and are by the most impartial and learned Writers, held to be in a State of Salvation.

But for such of the wiser and more vertuous Gentiles who liv'd after Christ, Writers generally seem a little more severe, though in Truth, the same Reason concludes favourably for both alike, it being no less difficult for many great Men of former Ages, though after Christ, to know the History and Doctrine of Jesus, as 'tis for any of the present Age to know the Transactions in the Dominions of *Presser John*, or of the Emperour of *China*. Nay, much more difficult, for of these Countries so remote as they are, we have, by the help of Navigation and Commerce, some sort of Account; but the Jews as they

they were to the *Romans* but an inconſiderable part of their Government, ſo the *Romans* themſelves held no ſuch Communication by Sea as now a-days, being ſurrounded with *Germans*, *Dacians*, *Parthians*, *Indians*, and the like, with whom they were in perpetual Hoſtility; and what Countries and Kingdoms lay beyond theſe, were utterly unknown to them by any kind of Correſpondence: So that we may as rationally conclude, that every Man now a-days is an ignorant Idiot, who does not know perhaps ſome new and great accident in *Japan*, or the Regions beyond the Mountains of the Moon, as that all were damn'd though otherwiſe never ſo wiſe and vertuous, who did not know the Hiſtory of the Goſpel, when yet we find how the Diſciples themſelves, who convers'd with Jeſus, were ignorant of the Nature of his Government, expecting a temporal Meſſiah, nor were they fully inſtructed till after the deſcent of the Holy Ghoſt; and even then too, we find *Peter* doubting whether it were lawfull to converſe with the Gentiles as appears by the caſe of *Cornelius*. It remains therefore that the Gentiles of this latter Age of the World, could have no other ways of knowing the Chriſtian Myſteries, but by ſuch ordinary methods as other matters of Fact are brought to Light,

which failing, the only *Medium* of Knowledg and Information, muſt be by an extraordinary Revealer.

And this was the true State of the World, in the firſt Age of the Church, when the Diſciples of Jeſus, furniſh'd with ſupernatural Gifts and Graces, were made the Apoſtles and Meſſengers of theſe glad Tidings of Salvation; nor did they doe all this in one Age, but ſucceeding Ages and Nations became Converts to the Chriſtian Faith, as new Diſcoveries, and Men of an Apoſtolick Spirit did preſent themſelves, as all Hiſtories do teſtifie: This then being the greateſt Point in Controverſie, I ſhall endeavour to purſue it more fully, by ſuch Arguments as Natural Reaſon and Scripture can afford us.

Firſt then, that ſuch Men as we now ſpeak of, having not by any Means, receiv'd Information of the Chriſtian Myſteries, ſhould yet be capable of Salvation, is very inſonant to the Nature of an All-mercifull and Righteous God, *viz.* Not to puniſh Men for what was not in their Power to help, or if in their Power, they would have yielded all dutifull Compliance with it. Now as this is conſonant to God's Goodneſs, ſo is it not derogatory to his Juſtice, conſidering, as I promis'd at firſt, that ſuch a knowledg of God and Practice of Moral

Moral Vertues, as we find oftentimes amongſt the Gentiles; are the Gifts of God, and not the Effects of Man's proper Will and Power; neither yet are they derogatory to the Merits of Chriſt, when we call to mind what was above promis'd; that Chriſt's Obedience and Paſſion, is the efficient and meritorious Cauſe of Man's Salvation; ſo that Man's knowledge being only inſtrumental, whatſoever influence it has, it muſt be deriv'd alſo from God, and reſolv'd finally into the Merits of Chriſt, according to my firſt two Axioms or Poſtulata's; let us argue then the Point a little cloſer: The King of *England* perhaps ſends a conſiderable Summ of Money, for the Redemption of all Engliſh Slaves throughout the Turkiſh Dominions; thoſe who hearing the joyfull News, readily embrace it with all imaginable Thankfulneſs, whilſt others hearing nothing of it ſit ſilent: now would it not ſeem very hard and unjuſt, that theſe ſhould be excluded from all Benefit by this Act of Grace and Bounty, and left in perpetual Bondage, becauſe they did not lay hold of that which they never heard of, which yet doubtleſs they would have embrac'd alſo, with the ſame ſenſe of Gratitude with others, had they had the ſame notice; nay rather, do we not account an unknown Act of Grace and Boun-

ty,

ty done to a Man, and before 'tis ſought for, to carry Characters of greater Goodneſs, and to lay a ſtronger Obligation alſo upon the Receiver, when he ſhall come to have a knowledg of his moſt generous Benefactour. So that I doubt not, but *Socrates*, *Ariſtides*, *Epictetus*, with other ſuch like Heroes, (whom without Blaſphemy or Hereſie, we may ſuppoſe capable of Mercy in the day of Judgment,) will exalt with great Joy, and celebrate the Praiſes of their gracious Redeemer, when they ſhall ſee him (though in the Clouds, yet) far more glorious than the Sun, and by whoſe Merits and Mercies they were brought into that luminous Region of Eternal Happineſs.

And as this is the Voice of Reaſon, ſo alſo is it of the Holy Scriptures. The firſt is that of the 11*th* to the *Hebrews*, where we read; that, *he that cometh to God, muſt believe he is, and the Rewarder of them who diligently ſeek him.* Now this belief many of the Heathens had, *viz.* of his Exiſtence, as alſo of a future State, where, after this Life, good Men ſhould be rewarded, and the Wicked Men puniſhed: we ſee then, that by theſe two Acts of Aſſent, the Heathens were ſaid to come to God, or to be admitted to his Favour and Grace, which yet cannot be verified of them, unleſs they

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be accounted capable of Salvation; nay, farther, this kind of coming to God, is called Faith, and such a Faith, without which 'tis impossible to please him; when the Apostle tells us in the Context, *That without Faith 'tis impossible to please God*, subjoining it presently as a Reason: *For he that cometh to God, must believe that he is*, &c. Another Argument from Scripture, is that Passage of *Cornelius* the Centurion, *Act* the 10*th*. who though a Heathen, yet by his Alms and Prayers, and the devout Order he kept in his Family, procur'd the Grace and Favour of God, to have St. *Peter* sent to him for his farther instruction. And of such force and conviction was this Truth, that even St. *Peter* himself, though the Apostle of the Circumcision, could not forbear to make an open profession of it, saying, of a truth I find, that God is no respecter of Persons, but in every Nation, he that feareth God, and worketh Righteousness, (as did *Cornelius*, and many also of the illuminated Gentiles,) is accepted of him. Nay St. *Peter*'s Discourse does imply, that in every Nation there might be some, who feared God, and wrought Righteousness, and if so, of a certain truth, they are accepted of him. To these Places we may add, what St. *Paul* testifies of himself, that though he had an historical Knowledg of the Life, Doctrines,

Doctrines and Sufferings of Jesus, and was a violent Persecuter of those who believed on him, yet obtain'd Mercy, because he did it in Ignorance and Unbelief, 1 *Tim.* 1. ought we therefore to exclude all from Mercy who never heard of Jesus, and yet such too, as would have been as ready as others to embrace him, and to suffer for him, had he been reveal'd unto them?

The last Argument which I shall take from Scripture, is that of the 1st to the *Romans*: *For the invisible Things of him* (saith St. *Paul*) *from the Creation of the World, are clearly seen, being understood by the Things that are made, even his Eternal Power and Godhead, so that they are without Excuse.* Here we see, that the Apostle condemns the Gentiles, not for Ignorance, or not Believing, but for their Idolatrous Worship, and not living conformably to that knowledg they had by the Works of the Creation of God's Eternity and Power, which Knowledg renders them inexcusable; and yet they would have been excusable, had not their Knowledg, join'd with a suitable Worship of the same true God, been capable to have procur'd their Happiness: For it would be unjust to condemn Men, for not doing of a thing, and yet condemn them too, although they doe it; and therefore a good Life, join'd with their Knowledg

ledg, muſt leave them with a reaſonable Excuſe, or make them capable of Salvation. 'Tis true, St. *Paul* ſpeaks in general Terms, that the Gentiles were Idolaters, and for that reaſon condemnable, as acting contrary to Knowledg; but that all the Gentiles thus acted contrary to Knowledg, does by no means follow from St. *Paul*'s manner of expreſſing himſelf, it being uſual in Scripture, to ſpeak of all in general and comprehenſive Terms, when ſuch as are or may be excepted, are very few in number: So the Prophet *Elijah*, in the Term of that general Apoſtacy under *Ahab* exclaim'd, ſaying, that he alone was left of all the true Worſhipers of God, 1 *Kings* 19. But God tells him, that he had *left in* Iſrael 7000 *Men, who had not bow'd the Knee to* Baal; and even in *Sodom*, the moſt wicked Town that ever was upon the Earth, there was found a Righteous *Lot*.

To put the Queſtion out of all diſpute, we have a moſt pregnant Proof from St. *Paul*, in his continuation of this Argument, 2 *Rom. v.* 10. pronouncing, *Glory Honour, and Peace, to every one that worketh Good, to the Jew firſt, and alſo to the Gentile, for there is no reſpect of Perſons with God*; (telling us alſo,) *that not the Hearers, but that the Doers of the Law are juſtified before God: For when*

when the Gentiles, who have not the Law, (that is, a reveal'd Written Law,) *doe by Nature the Things contain'd in the Law, they having not the Law, are a Law unto themſelves, which ſhew the Work of the Law written in their Hearts, their Conſciences alſo bearing witneſs*, &c. In this Place, St. *Paul* treating profeſſedly of the Law of Nature, by which the Gentiles did act, calls it the Law (*viz.* of God) written in their Hearts, and that acting according to the Dictates of this Law, they doe the Things contain'd in the Law, having the Teſtimony alſo of their Conſciences acquitting them for ſo doing; and therefore Doers of the Law, are juſtified in the ſight of God. And truly I am the more confirm'd in this Opinion, when I think upon that laſt great and final Sentence, which ſhall paſs on Men, at the general Judgment of the World: Many then ſhall make great Oſtentation of the Faith, ſaying; *Lord, Lord, have we not propheſied in thy Name*, Mat. 7. *and in thy Name caſt out Divels*, &c. But Chriſt knows them not, but tells them, *Mat.* 25. that becauſe they did not doe Works of Mercy towards their Brethren, (the ſuffering Members of Chriſt) they ſhould go into utter Darkneſs, but that thoſe who did ſhew compaſſion towards them, ſhould enter into Everlaſting Happineſs.

Let

Let us now ſee, what may be objected againſt this Diſcourſe: And firſt, Chriſt before his Aſcenſion, *Mark* 16. ſays. *He that believeth, and is Baptiz'd, ſhall be ſaved; but he that believeth not, ſhall be damn'd:* Now, that thoſe who never heard of Chriſt, do not believe, is plain alſo (from 10th to the *Rom.*) *How ſhall they believe on him, of whom they have not heard, and how ſhall they hear without a Preacher?* therefore no Salvation to thoſe who never heard of Chriſt.

To this Objection (which indeed carries the greateſt force of any thing that can be urg'd) I anſwer: Firſt, that Paſſage of the 16th of St. *Mark*, *He that believeth not is damn'd*, is not to be underſtood negatively, as though an Ignorance of Chriſt, and of his Doctrines, did certainly expoſe Men to Damnation; for then the Children of Chriſtian Parents, dying before they come of Age, to make an Act of Faith, would be damn'd: The Words then of this Place do include a poſitive Act of diſ-believing, or rejecting the Doctrines of Chriſt after they are propos'd: This is evident from the Context in the precedent Verſe, where Chriſt gives Authority to his Diſciples; ſaying, *Go ye into all the World, and preach the Goſpel to every Creature; he that believeth and is Baptiz'd ſhall be ſav'd, but he that believeth not*

not ſhall be damn'd. So that they are damn'd, who after the Goſpel was preach-ed to them, did yet reject it, all which concerns not thoſe, who never heard of Chriſt, nor of his Goſpel

This then doth ſuperſede that alſo of *Rom.* the 10th. where the Apoſtle ſpeaketh of a poſitive and explicite Act of Faith, for *v.* the 9th he ſaith; that *if thou ſhalt confeſs with thy Mouth the Lord Jeſus, and believe in thy Heart, that God raiſed him from the Dead, thou ſhalt be ſav'd*: Now as ſuch a Faith cannot be attain'd, but by the preaching of the Goſpel, or from extraordinary Revelation, ſo neither doth it follow from hence, that all who have not receiv'd this joyfull Tidings of the Goſpel, ſhall not be ſav'd. He that is a great Linguiſt, is generally reckon'd to be a learned Man, and yet from thence it doth not follow, that he who is not a great Linguiſt, is not a learned Man; upon the whole, the Senſe of the Apoſtle amounts to no more but this; that they who by the hearing of God's Word, or of Teachers, ſhall arrive to a knowledg of Jeſus Chriſt their Saviour, and believe his Reſurrection, are in a State of Salvation, *quoad Antecedens*, in reſpect of the means; but *quoad Conſequens*, or the effect, that all ſuch ſhall actually be ſav'd, is no way aſcertain'd from the forementiond place.

place. We read every where in Scripture, of those who make shipwrack of their Faith, and of falling from the Faith: and when we are exhorted to stand stedfast in the Faith, this does imply a possibility of lapsing: Nor is it any thing to the purpose to say, that no Man, who has once embrac'd the true Faith, can fall from it; for the Faith which the Apostles exhorts us to stand stedfast in, is doubtless the True Faith. In like manner at the 13 *v.* of the same 10th Chap. to the *Romans* we read, that *whosoever calleth upon the Name of the Lord shall be saved*; and yet *Matth.* 7th we read, *Not every one that saith Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, but he that doeth the Will*, &c. So that all such Places are not to be understood Mathematically, and precisely such as cannot be otherwise; but morally, or as to the general, being attended with a good Life, and good Works of Christian Charity.

But it may be farther objected, *John* the 3d. *Except a Man be born of Water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God*; so that Salvation cannot be had without Baptism, but they who never heard of Christ, could never be Baptiz'd into Christ, and must be therefore excluded Salvation. To this I answer, that Baptism under the Gospel, is the same with Circumcision un-

der the Law, this being a Type of the other, and both of them a Sign or Seal of a Covenant of Mercy. But in the time of the Law, we read of many who were not Circumcis'd, such as *Job*, *Melchisedech*, *Lot*, and others, of whose Salvation we can in no ways doubt; the Females also amongst the Jews were uncapable of Circumcision, and yet we doubt not but great Numbers of them were sav'd; so likewise since the time of the Gospel, we may charitably believe, that the Children of Christian Parents who dyed before Baptism, may be capable of Salvation also. 2. The foremention'd place therefore is of the same Latitude with that of *John* the 16th. *Except ye eat the Flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his Blood, ye have no Life in you*; from which place, some of the Ancients, and the Greeks to this day, hold the Eucharist necessary to Infants; but notwithstanding that the form of Words be the same in both Places, yet we do not believe, that Children are oblig'd to come to the Lord's Supper; and even Men who dye immediately after Baptism, are undoubtedly sav'd, though they were never Partakers of the Holy Communion.

It has been a Maxim I know amongst the Ancients, that *Extra Ecclesiam non est salus*, which throughout all Ages (with due Reverence do I speak it) hath been by

by many ſo ſtrain'd and ſtretch'd, or rather ſtraitened and confin'd, as to exclude all other Chriſtians alſo from Salvation, who are not of the ſame Communion with themſelves; Nay, even amongſt us of this Age and Nation, we have a ſort of Grinning, Cenſorious, Prick-ear'd Hypocrites, who will hardly believe any to have a true Call, who are not of their own Brotherhood, Siſterhood, I might ſay: For their Devotion leans, or rather lies much that way. The former Maxim then (with all ſubmiſſion to the venerable aſſerters of it) does not ſo much concern thoſe who never were within the Communion of the Church, as them who having been ſometimes within its Boſome, are afterwards cut off by Excommunication, and ejected out of it for Schiſm, Hereſie, or ſome grievous crimes, as the practices of all Ages do amply teſtifie, though which of the contending parties was in the right, or was the true Church, was many times a matter of endleſs Diſpute. Emulation and private Animoſities being oftentimes the Cauſe and Fomenter of ſuch ſevere Cenſures: And to ſhew that this is the true ſenſe of the forementiond Maxim, I would only ask of what Communion were the *Magi*, or the wiſe Men in the *Eaſt*, who came to worſhip Chriſt? Not of the Jew-

iſh Synagogue certainly, nor of the number of thoſe who were Baptiz'd into the Chriſtian Faith. And yet no Man doubts but that they who were the firſt to worſhip Chriſt with their rich Offerings, and came ſo long a Journey, were made partakers of the Benefits of his Life and Paſſion.

The Jewiſh Church was a Type of the Chriſtian, and much narrower, whether we conſider its Dimenſions or the Terms of its Communion; for they were under ſtricter Covenants of Salvation and Mercy, under divers Burthenſome Ordinances, and more eſpecially oblig'd to Circumciſion; and yet by God's ſpecial Mercy, great numbers were ſav'd, who were ſtrangers to the Church. For beſides, ſuch aforemention'd as *Job*, *Melchiſedech*, and others, with their Families, we read of *Nineveh*, the greateſt City in the World, together with its King, the moſt Potent Temporal Prince then reigning upon the Earth, that upon the Preaching of *Jonah*, they turn'd from their evil way to the true God, with ſuch humility and ſeverity of Repentance as we no where read the like. For even their very Cattle were oblig'd to faſt, and were cloath'd with Sack-cloth: Now can we think that all they whom God by ſuch an eſpecial care did call to Repentance,

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and who teſtified ſuch an univerſal and ready Obedience to his heavenly Will, were deliver'd only from Temporal judgements, to be afterwards overwhelm'd all of them with Eternal Torments? But it may be ſaid, that this was an Extraordinary Caſe, and ſo ſay I too. The ordinary and ſafeſt way to Salvation, is by a belief on Jeſus Chriſt, and of his Myſteries, and by the Adminiſtration of the Sacraments, and the obſervance of Evangelical Duties. But notwithſtanding, God who may and often doth diſpenſe with his own Methods, may in ſome extraordinary Caſes ſhew Mercy to a few, and call them by ſome ſpecial means unto Salvation.

In the laſt place, it may be alleadg'd perhaps, That the works of the beſt Men amongſt the Heathens, cannot be acceptable in the ſight of God; for as much as they want Charity. Now Charity is one of the Graces of God's holy Spirit, not acquirable, but infus'd under the diſpenſation of the Goſpel. 'Tis true, Charity is an excellent Grace, and the nobleſt of all thoſe which we are capable to receive from the inſpiration of God's holy Spirit; for other Graces tend chiefly to the private benefit of him on whom they are beſtowed; but Charity is a Ray of the divine Beauty and Excellence, and dilates it ſelf

in the good of others, extending it ſelf through the whole World without the leaſt proſpect of advantage to it ſelf. It carries the Soul as on the Wings of a Cherubim into the divine Preſence, where contemplating its own unworthineſs in the infinite Perfection and Goodneſs of God, it ſallies out into Acts of Admiring and Adoration, and thinks all too little for an All-merciful and Omnipotent Creatour. Now if the Heathens had Speculations of this kind, (though imperfect ones, but ſuitable to the means of knowledge,) I cannot ſee why they might not exert them by ſome efforts, which might hold a kind of Analogy with thoſe purer Emanations of that true flaming Charity, which is no ways attainable, but by the free Grace and infuſion of the Holy Ghoſt; for though the better Heathens did not always do good works (or perhaps but ſeldom) with a reference of them to God, as the ultimate end and chiefeſt good; yet for as much as they propos'd good by what they did, and practis'd Vertue for its own reward, the ſole Intention of a good end (without farther reward) was an implicite devolution of the action it ſelf upon God, as the firſt Mover and grand Scope to which it tended. And if to make an action good, it be requiſite that the Agent have

have God always before his Eyes, ſome good works, even of the beſt Chriſtians, will be found defective upon this account; for even the beſt of Men may many times do good works, becauſe they are good, not thinking of God, the Original of all good, and into whom, as into the Ocean, all ſtreams of Goodneſs at laſt return.

The ſumm of what I have hitherto ſpoken upon this Argument does amount to this; That an explicite Belief of the Myſteries of the Chriſtian Religion, accompanied with an Oral Confeſſion, and the Adminiſtration of the Sacraments, though they be points of greateſt Moment, and exceeding helpfull, and the only ſafe way to Man's Salvation, yet are they not ſo abſolutely and indiſpenſably neceſſary, but that 'tis poſſible, in ſome extraordinary caſes, Salvation may be obtain'd where theſe are wanting.

Nor is this Doctrine of the poſſibility of Salvation for the Gentiles, in ſuch form as hath been already ſtated, without its Abettours, even amongſt the moſt learned and impartial, ſuch as (a) *Ludovicus Vives*, and (b) *Eraſmus*, as Biſhop (c) *Montacute* reports. Nay he tells us out of *Baletus*, that the Divines of *Colon* were ſometimes of Opinion, that *Ariſtotle* was ſav'd; teaching farther, that *Ariſtotle* was the fore runner

a in Auguſt. de civit. dei. l. 18. c. 47.
b Tract. de ſalut. Pagan.
c Apparat. p. 36.

ner of Christ in what related to Nature, as *John* the Baptist was in what related to Grace. But to pass by this Opinion touching *Aristotle*, *Andreas Vega*, and *Dominicus a Soto* in the Council of *Trent*, openly defended the above mention'd Doctrine of the possibility of the Gentiles being sav'd, and (d) *Franciscus à Victoria* lays it down as the Doctrine of St. *Thomas* of *Aquin*, that the *Indians* who never heard of Christ, were not guilty of the sin of Infidelity. Amongst the reform'd *Zuinglius* in his Exposition of the Christian Faith, declared to *Francis* the King of *France*, (whom *Vossius* (e) calls *Maximi Nominis Expositor Fidei*,) does by name place *Aristides*, *Socrates*, the *Scipioes*, and the *Catoes* amongst the Blessed. Nor did many of the Primitive Fathers, such as *Justin Martyr*, *Clemens Alexandrinus*, *Epiphanius*, and *Chrisostom* stick to affirm it of many of the Ancient Heathens, who liv'd before the Nativity of Christ, as *Isaac*, *Casaubon*, (f) reports.

d Relect. 5. de Indis Sect. 8.

e Disputat. de Sanct. 25. Thes. 11.

f Initio 1. exer. it. adv. Baron.

But on which side soever the Truth doth lie, it is not a point of that moment as to dissolve the Bond of Charity amongst Christians, especially when Charity, the very Bond of Perfection, inclines us to take side with Mercy. God's Mercy is his Triumphant Attribute, *the Lord Merciful and*

and Gracious, long ſuffering and of great goodneſs, is the old Stile, and that by which God proclaim'd his greatneſs, (*Exod.* 3. 4.) and whoſoever ſhall conſider the ineffable Myſtery of the Son of God's Incarnation; as alſo the Redemption of the World by his moſt holy Life, dolorous Paſſion, and glorious Reſurrection and Aſcenſion, cannot but feel ſome holy Flames of divine Love, whoſe light may extend it ſelf to the Gentiles. Nay, though the Opinion which I have been now defending were falſe, yet is it not dangerous or damnable: For the Belief even of a Falſhood, to ſuch as are not convinc'd that it is ſo, may be pious and praiſe worthy. 'Tis certainly praiſe worthy and pious for a Man to believe his Parents or Benefactours to be happy in Heaven, and yet peradventure they may be in the number of the Reprobate. Of all Men, Chriſtians certainly are in the happieſt Eſtate, when we conſider the aſſiſtance they have from the Goſpel, and yet are they in the unhappieſt ſtate too upon the ſame Conſideration, for where much is given, much will be requir'd.

Great and infinite are the Advantages which the Goſpel offers; we are there taught in what a dangerous Eſtate we are in by Nature, we are taught alſo by whom we

we are deliver'd from danger, and how we may have the benefit of ſuch Deliverance: We have Holy Sacraments to purge our Sins, and to encreaſe our Grace, we have many glorious Examples of Piety and Vertue to encourage us, and moſt heavenly Precepts, by which to govern our Lives; we have the recompenſe of Reward in ſight, and Promiſes of Help, both for our Direction and Furtherance in the way.

The Church, which is abundantly furniſh'd with all theſe means, may juſtly be compar'd to a well built Ship, in which are all ſorts of Proviſions requiſite for a long Voyage. Suppoſe we then, that a Man were to take his Voyage into a new World (as indeed we are all going thitherward in a ſpiritual ſenſe) and that wanting the convenience of a good Veſſel, well rigg'd and furniſh'd, he ſhould ſet forth upon his ſtrength, or perhaps embark himſelf upon ſome poor, ſhatter'd, leaking Boat or Junc, ſuch as are in uſe amongſt the *Indians*, 'tis ten thouſand to one, but ſuch a Man muſt periſh, though 'tis not utterly impoſſible, but that with great care and difficulty, and by God's ſingular Providence, he may arrive thither with ſafety; and for ought we know, the new World, I mean *America*, was Peopled ſome ſuch way, admitting *Noah's* Flood to have been univerſal; ſince we cannot

not find from any Records of Antiquity, that Navigation after the Deluge was in any perfection, but that Men of that and of ſome ſucceeding Ages, conſidering how they had eſcap'd the dangers of the Waters, were fearfull to commit themſelves to the boundleſs Ocean, not daring ſo much, as to put to Sea for a long time after, and that too by little and little, as Experience encourag'd them to make farther Trial. The Emblem holds good Analogy with the Voyage we are all making into the other World: This Life is the Sea, where we are expos'd to Tempeſts and Fatigues; we have a bottomleſs Gulf under us, and many Rocks, Quick-Sands, and Hurry-canes ever and anon threatning to deſtroy us, and notwithſtanding the good Proviſion with which the Ship is fraught; if we live not temporately, and with good conduct, we may fall ſhort of the deſired Countrey, whilſt others by God's ſingular Providence and Mercy, though deſtitute of ſuch helps, may find an extraordinary deliverance, as we find ſometimes to have happened to ſuch, as putting to Sea ill provided, and for a long time given over for loſt, have after all their dangers arriv'd ſafely to the Haven.

Put the Caſe we were upon a Voyage to *America* (or the New World, as we call it,) and that others alſo ſhould be bound for

for the ſame Coaſt, but not perhaps in the ſame Bottom, who though they ſhould ſail at ſome diſtance from us, yet ought we to have compaſſion on them, and ſo much the more, the greater ſhould their diſtance be, and the weaker the Ship which carried them; and if we could not take them into our own Veſſel, at leaſt we were bound to ſuccour them, as far as we were able, and where that could not be done, to recommend them to the Mercy of Almighty God. But inſtead of theſe Offices of Humanity, if we ſhould denie them Succour, nay perhaps turn Pyrats and fall upon them, and make them Prize, and condemn all the Paſſengers to Chains and Slavery; would not ſuch Proceedings ſeem very inhumane, and might we not fear, that a juſtly exaſperated God, might bring our own Ship under ſome fatal Diſtreſs, before it ſhould arrive to the Land 'twas bound for: The Parallel is obvious.

Charity, is an Heroick and Divine Grace, in the Judgment of St. *Paul*, far exceeding all other Gifts, how excellent ſoever; nay, even Faith and Martyrdom, without it, would be to little purpoſe. The Gifts of Propheſies and Tongues ſhall ceaſe; and Knowledg, like a Dream, ſhall vaniſh; for we know but in part, and that like the reflection of Images from a brittle Glaſs:

Glaſs: But Charity is of a permanent and Celeſtial Nature, it hopeth all things, it boaſteth not it ſelf, it ſeeketh not its own but another's good, and of the three Graces, though it be rank'd in the laſt place, yet is it, by the Apoſtle, accounted the firſt and greateſt of them. If we look into the Tranſactions of the World, we ſhall ever find thoſe to have been the braveſt, who were moſt diffuſive of their Goodneſs, and the wider they extended their Compaſſion and Bounty, the greater Honours were they ever thought worthy of. This greatneſs of Mind, in doing good to all, not that ſwelling Ambition of enlarging it ſelf by Dominion and Empire, was that in all Ages made Men Heroes, and in ſome ſort Partakers of the Divine Nature; whereas private Ends, with thoughts and Contrivances which terminate in our own good only, have been ever accounted Characters of a narrow and ſtraitened Mind.

The CONCLUSION.

THE great Scope of this whole Diſcourſe, through all the precedent Chapters, has been to combat Atheiſm and Irreligion, or Profaneſs, from the Light of Nature

Nature, which not only ſhews us the Exiſtence of a God, but that the moſt perfect and pureſt Worſhip, by which a Creature is capable to expreſs his Adoration, is moſt juſtly due unto him. The Exiſtence of a God is diſcover'd to us from the Theory of Nature, from Principles of Reaſon, and from the Eminent Teſtimonies of the beſt Men in all Ages. By the ſame Light we diſcover alſo ſome of the Attributes of God, indeed ſo Eſſential, that they are incommunicable to any other Being, and ſerve to prove both the Unity, as well as the Verity of the Godhead. Theſe I have briefly ſpoken to, foraſmuch as they are every where copiouſly and clearly handled by ſuch, as write upon this Subject.

The conſiderations of God, in relation to his Creatures, do afford us a larger field of Matter to travel in, whether we reflect upon his Works, or the Worſhip he requires of us. The grand Work of Creation, is as demonſtrable as any thing in Nature, from the impoſſibility of a fortuitous production of the World, out of a pre-exiſtent Chaos, and from an Incorruptibility of an Eternity of Matter with that of the Godhead; ſo that the very Creation of the World out of nothing, is another Argument of the Verity and Unity of the Divine Nature.

But

But God's conſerving Power or Providence, being that we daily Experiment, and by which we have ſo near and neceſſary a dependance on him, even in our Beings, and in all our Actions, is a Point of great Importance alſo, and capable of a larger Diſcourſe; whether we conſider the Works of Nature in general, or Humane Affairs, in the regard they have either to publick Societies and Kingdoms, or to the particular Concerns of private Men. That God's Providence is concern'd in all theſe, and has an influence upon the Revolutions of Kingdoms is unqueſtionable: What Meaſures and Inferences may be drawn from hence, is a Matter of more diſpute, wherein we have endeavour'd to ſhew, that God's determination or ordering of theſe Affairs, is no Argument to prove them to be always good, ſo as to juſtifie the Inſtrument, by which ſuch his Purpoſes are brought to paſs. We have ſeen in *tranſitu* what influence God's free Knowledg has on future Actions, and how far Man may be a free Agent, notwithſtanding ſuch Preſcience or Decrees of God.

What hitherto has been ſpoken of, are Points of ſpeculation; that which follows, and is ſo neceſſary alſo to be known of God concerns Practice, being no other than our Duty to him, which is his Worſhip. We have

have ſeen how the Gentiles, and that all Ages and Kingdoms of the World, ever held a Divine Worſhip, to be due from them, though almoſt all of them were Idolaters, and ſuperſtitious in ſuch Worſhip, placing it on falſe Gods; and thoſe few amongſt them, who by the Light of Nature, were directed to the Worſhip of the true God, were yet very ignorant of the true Worſhip of God; ſuch a Worſhip being to be known only by Divine Revelation. And although all the Heathen Law-givers and Founders of Religion pretended to receive their Precepts from ſome kind of Deity, and by Revelation, yet foraſmuch as all ſuch Deities were notoriouſly falſe, and their Superſtition long ſince vaniſh'd out of the World, we ought not to give them a place amongſt the Founders of reveal'd Worſhip; and therefore we have conſider'd ſuch religious Worſhip, as is at this day in Vogue, having for its Object the true God, and which make claim alſo to divine Revelation: Of which

The firſt is the Jewiſh, touching whoſe Original, there is no diſpute amongſt any Profeſſors of Religion at this day extant in the World; for both Chriſtians, as well as Mahometans, do acknowledg *Moſes* to have receiv'd his Laws from God; and that the Jews were a People ſet apart by God for his

his peculiar Worſhip, appears abundantly from the preſervation of that little Nation, and of their Rites amidſt all the Kingdoms of the Earth which ſurrounded them, and held them in ſubjection; from whom, as they differ'd extremely in Matters of Religion, ſo was it impoſſible, but their Religion ſhould have been drown'd in that Ocean of Superſtition which encompaſs'd them (conſidering alſo their frequent Apoſtaſies, Perſecutions, and Inclinations to Idolatry,) had they not been upheld by a Divine Power, from whom their Religion was deriv'd.

Notwithſtanding this, their Religion was but Temporary, and to determine in the Meſſiah, to whom alſo all the great Promiſes of the Old Teſtament, all the Rites, Ceremonies, and Sacrifices had an immediate regard, as Types and Figures, in whom alſo they were all fully verified and accompliſh'd; which Meſſiah, was no other but Jeſus of *Nazareth*, the true Saviour, not only of the Jews, but of all other Nations, and who alſo was and is the Authour and Preſerver of the Chriſtian Religion, which God was pleas'd to reveal by him, as the only ſafe and ſecure way to everlaſting Happineſs. This has been the chief Subject of this Book, and the Truth hereof has been demonſtrated, not only from the Types and

Propheſies of the Old Teſtament, but from the Life, Doctrine, and Miracles of Jeſus; to which may be added, the miraculous Effects and Succeſs, this Doctrine met with in the Converſion of the World.

The Mahometan Sect, had for its Authour *Mahomet*, who alſo pretended to divine Revelation; but for what appears of him, how wide ſoever he has extended his Dominion, he was no other than a notorious Impoſtor, whoſe Paradiſe was Senſuality, and his Religion Empire.

The Diſcourſe of the Soul's Immortality, was a natural Reſult from the former Conſiderations, of which alſo the better and more learned Heathens had a belief, no leſs than of the Exiſtence of God, and of a Providence: From all which Premiſes by an unavoidable Sequel of Reaſon, we were led on to enquire, what Benefits ſuch Heathens were capable to receive from this kind of Knowledge, concluding according to the dictates of Charity, that they were not all excluded from Salvation through the Merits and Satisfaction of Chriſt, whom they never had the means to underſtand; for though they not the true knowledge of God, (which can be no other but what is reveal'd,) yet having a knowledge of the true God from the Light of Nature, that Knowledge, by God's Mercy,

with

with a Life ſuitable thereunto, might render them capable of future Bliſs.

Thus far the Light of Nature, like that of the Star to the *Magi*, may conduct the Gentiles to the Nativity of Chriſt, and of his Religion, where vaniſhing at the riſing of the Sun, even that of Righteouſneſs, which does illuminate and quicken the World with its ſalutiferous Beams, we muſt be now contented to loſe our mid-night Guide, in that glorious Luminary of the Day, whoſe benign Influence, does not only quicken all it ſhines upon, but gives an orient Luſtre to it and diſcovers to us great and noble Proſpects, ſome more remote and diſtant, and others near at hand.

The firſt thing which occurs to our view from the Light of the Goſpel, is the Church, which preſents it ſelf ſomething in the appearance of a fair Foreſt, wherein are all ſorts of Trees and Plants, ſome bearing good Fruit, ſome bad, with numberleſs Rocks and ſtumbling Stones, together with Thorns and Briars; where we may obſerve alſo divers large Roads, with many By-ways and Paths croſſing and winding with in one another, in manner of a Labyrinth. Beyond this we have two vaſt and boundleſs Proſpects, *viz.* one of a moſt glorious Region, lying in a moſt ſweet and ſerene Air, and crown'd with a moſt beautifull

City, the whole Country being adorn'd every where with infinite variety of Fountains and Rivulets, of Fruit-Trees, Gardens, Groves, odoriferous Flowers and Plants, with whatsoever there is in Nature, which may refresh and charm the weary and curious Traveller. The other Prospect, as of a Region quite different from the former, being cover'd continually with a pitchy Smoak, mixt with Gletes of sulphurous Flames, which do not only threaten to obscure the Sun, but with their noisome and bituminous Smells, accompanied with loud Groans and Howlings, fill the Eyes and Ears of the beholder with as great a Terrour, as the other Region does affect him with Admiration and Delight.

Now so it is, that whosoever would arrive to that glorious Region before mention'd, must pass through this Forest, where are many wild Beasts and Serpents, many hollow, dark Grots or Dens; and the many cross Paths turning and winding one within another, make the Passage very difficult and dangerous; so that the Traveller will be in Peril of falling into inextricable Perplexities, without the help of an experienc'd Guide. And truly whosoever travels this way, it will not be long before he shall find a Guide, offering himself to be his Convoy; saying, Sir, if you please

to

to follow me, I will undertake to furniſh you with what is neceſſary for this Journey, and bring you ſafe to that delightfull Country which you ſee before you, though afar off, and whither you deſire to arrive. No, ſays another Guide, believe him not, for he will but trapan you, and carry you to that gloomy Region of Darkneſs and Horrour; but if you pleaſe to truſt your ſelf with me, I'll engage to conduct you a new, ſafer, and ſhorter way, than any which hath hitherto been found out. Matters ſtanding in this debate, the curious Traveller, cannot but ſtand amaz'd too; but how will he be diſtracted, when he ſhall find theſe Guides, inſtead of lending him their charitable help, to fall a quarelling with one another, to that degree, as to exchange Blows, not only wounding, but dragging one another through the Thorns and Briars, through Thick and Thin, to that black Stygian Kingdom, where diſmal Horrour and Torments reign eternally? Such an Entertainment at a Man's firſt entrance on his Journey, is enough to diſcourage him, and make him draw back his Foot, and ſeek ſome other means to conduct him Heaven-ward. And yet this he cannot doe without manifeſt Peril.

What course then must he take? There is none more safe certainly than to have recourse to the divine Oracle by the Mouth of the Prophet *Jeremiah: Thus saith the Lord, stand ye in the Ways, and see and ask for the old Paths, where is the good Way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest unto your Souls.* The old Ways then are the safest; and if so, the old Guides too, * who have been longest acquainted with the Ways, will be the fittest to be rely'd upon, We ought therefore to have an implicite Belief of the good conduct of such a one; for although he may step aside sometimes, yet may we with great security trust him; or if at any time we think otherwise than he doth, let us have a care at least, that we do not contend with him; considering, that it is he who keeps our *Viaticum*, and has the dispensation of that Provision, which must sustain us in the way: And if we chance to leave him, or he us, we shall not only be destitute of convenient Food, but wandring up and down the Forest through dangerous Places, amongst the Bushes and Thorns, be in danger of Wolves, and at Night run into the dark and dolefull Region before describ'd. Let us then stick fast to our old Guide, yet so, as not to shut our Eyes, and to be led blindfold: No, let us make use of our own Eyes too, sometimes

Jerem. c. 6.

* Even the Successors of the Apostles and of the Primitive Fathers, and who have been longest acquainted, &c.

times fixing them on that beautiful Kingdom we are going to, whoſe ſight the the nearer we approach to it, will wonderfully refreſh us, and make us double our Pace. Sometimes alſo let us look downwards towards our feet, for fear of ſtumbling; for we ſhall meet with many rugged paſſages and ſtops in our Travel. But above all, let us remember that the Prince to whom this delightfull Country doth belong, will refreſh us in our Journey, not only with ſuitable Proviſions, but with the directions and conſolations of his Embaſſadour, even the holy Spirit. So that being thus provided for our Voyage, let us ſet forwards in an humble reliance upon the all-ſufficiency and goodneſs of him who invites us to him.

Let us not be diſheartned for the difficulties and dangers of the way, nor ſcandaliz'd for the contention amongſt the Guides; for 'tis no more than what the King himſelf, to whoſe Country we are going, has long ſince foretold us, *viz.* that many falſe Guides or Prophets ſhall ariſe with many great Seducers, who ſhall pretend alſo to be Chriſt: He has told us, that his Church here on Earth, is like a fruitfull Field, in which he, the good Husbandman, did ſow pure Grain, but whilſt the Labourers ſlept, the Enemy ſowed his

Tares. Theſe Tares then of Contention and Diſputation, are of the Enemy's ſowing, and ſprang up preſently after the good Corn, and will continue growing in the Field till the Harveſt of the World. Whoſoever ſhall endeavour to deſtroy them, will in all likelihood tread down the good Grain alſo; and ſince they cannot prevent the Enemies malice, 'tis the duty of the Labourers when they ſow good Grain to be watchfull, and to nip theſe ſpreading weeds at their firſt appearance; for they are of a hungry and devouring Nature, robbing all the good Juyce and Nutriment to themſelves, and by the many windings of their Wyres, they pluck the Stalks of good Corn down to the Ground. There is nothing certainly more pernicious to the Peace and Tranquillity of Religion, than frequent diſputations about it; for though many at firſt, out of an itch of Oſtentation, may enter upon a Diſpute, yet they ſeldom quit it but with great Animoſity, and by their endleſs controverſies, bring the Myſteries of Religion, and the Articles of our Faith under Scepticiſm and Doubt.

Happy were the Patriarchs of the firſt Age, without diſpute, whoſe Religion conſiſted in an Adoration of Almighty God their Creator. They never troubled their Brains with Metaphyſical Quiddities

and

and Diſtinctions; 'twas their early buſineſs of the morning to make their offerings to the God of Heaven for the expiation of their ſins, and thereby make him propitious. They did celebrate his Praiſes in ſome ſhort pious Hymns, expreſſing his Greatneſs and Goodneſs, and afterwards betaking themſelves to the ordinary Duties of their Life, which were for the moſt part paſtoral; they could not but make infinite improvements of their time, by obſerving the Power and Goodneſs of their Maker, in the bountifull returns from the Earth, and by obſerving dayly the Beauties of Nature, with the Viciſſitudes of Seaſons, and the favourable influence of the heavens. The Works of God were the ſubject of their innocent Speculation, whoſe wonders alſo they tranſmitted to Poſterity, by telling, what deliverances their Fore-fathers, as alſo they themſelves had found at his hands. Meditations and Diſcourſes like theſe, did interfere commonly in all the Employments and Occurrences of their Lives; and thus by an innocent Labour of Body, and by Methods of Sobriety, Temperance, and Frugality, unknown to thoſe of this luxurious and degenerate Age, they did arrive to length of days, retaining to the laſt an uninterrupted Health and Vegeteneſs of Mind; and when Nature

Nature had ſpun its courſe, they did wind up their Lives by recommending their Spirits into the hands of their Creator, and ſlept with their Fathers, leaving their Children to follow their good Examples. Thus far'd it with the happy Patriarchs.

And truly, under the Goſpel, I cannot ſee, but Men may be as happy, nay more happy if they pleaſe; the Duties which Chriſt requires of us, carry their own reward, tending all of them to the perfecting of the Moral Law, and to ſettle the Spirit upon a true Baſis of repoſe. The Articles of Faith, as they are tender'd to us in the Goſpel, are few; and to an humble and unprejudic'd Mind, carry light and life with them, although diſputations and heterodox Queſtions may ariſe in the Church, and embroil many with Faction and perplex'd Notions, what is this to a modeſt and humble Chriſtian? The practice of whoſe life conſiſts, Firſt, in a dutiful Adoration of Almighty God, expecting Salvation from him through the Merits of his only Son Jeſus Chriſt our Lord, reſigning up himſelf wholly to his Providence, and being always thankful under every circumſtance of life. Secondly, in performing works of Juſtice and Charity towards his Neighbour: and laſtly, in living

ving ſoberly as to himſelf, and bringing his extravagant Paſſions and deſires under ſubjection. Let not ſuch a one diſcompoſe his Reſt, by endeavouring to fathom the inexhauſtible depths of Knowledge with intricate and fruitleſs Enquiries, which indeed are thoſe Thorns and Thiſtles from whence Men ſhall never gather Grapes nor Figs; they who fall amongſt them will be entangled with their prickly Snares. No, let a Man live ſo as to have a care of himſelf, and to hope the beſt of another; and thus, being freed from ſuperfluous Anxiety, he will go through with the Duties of Life, and even of Death, with great alacrity, having attain'd to a true Settlement and Tranquillity of Mind.

FINIS.

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